# Theological Magazine

of the

Evangelical Synod of North America.

Published by the Evangelical Synod of North America. Price per year (six numbers) $2.00; to foreign countries, $2.20. Rev. H. Kamphausen, Dr. theol. (Giessen Univ.), 9807 Cudell Ave., Cleveland, Ohio, Editor.

All communications relating to editorial work, all contributions and exchanges must be addressed to the editor.

All communications relating to business matters must be addressed to Eden Publishing House, 1712-18 Chouteau Ave., St. Louis, Mo.

VOL. 56. ST. LOUIS, MO. MAY 1928.

## THE BENEDICTION, A BLESSING OR A PRAYER?

Professor John O. Evjen, Ph.D.

A young Protestant clergyman years ago related to a group of ministerial brethren how he once had made, suddenly and unexpectedly, "easy money" by pronouncing the benediction at a high school commencement in a city in the West where he was pastor. Sitting in the high school auditorium, listening to the entertainers on the platform, he was approached by the school superintendent, who asked him to ascend the platform, and after the program was rendered, to dismiss the audience by pronouncing the benediction. The clergyman consented, and—it is not wrong to say—performed. Later, being asked what his compensation was, he replied: Ten Dollars. He promptly received the money and was so proud of his fee and feat that he could boast of the incident for years afterward, as he was doing when the writer happened to hear this tale from the smiling parson himself.

Without discussing whether such an act should be severely rubricated as modern Simony or recorded as old-fashioned *subsidium charitativum,* it may be granted that fees for ritualistic acts are not always out of place. A clergyman requested to function at a funeral which he can attend only by going to considerable expense, is entitled to some reimbursement for his time, to say the least, even if thoughtless custom and ceremony decided for him that he was to "say" nothing more than the benediction. But it is poor

taste and bad ethics for a minister of the Gospel to act thoughtlessly as a mere master of ceremony or as a representative of the Aaronic priesthood at a commencement or any other similar gathering where the transactions may be psychologically, or otherwise, quite a hindrance or not conducive to the preparation needed for apprehending a religious message of any kind.

There are many high school programs where a benediction is in place; and many where it is a challenging farce, especially when it is considered religiously necessary that only a clergyman can pronounce it, and that it be made a matter of fees. Such a practice, hard by magic and commercialism, spells poor religion and poor economics for the "lay" superintendent as well as for the ordained clergyman.

Unfortunately, much confusion exists as to the matter of benedictions. It may suffice to relate one more incident, illustrative of this. A professor in the public schools, who occasionally preached, was once asked to occupy, on a Sunday, one of the pulpits in a neighboring town. No ordained man was available. His reply was significant: Being a Presbyterian he could preach, but he could not pronounce the benediction, because he was not ordained. He said, this was good Presbyterianism.

I hold no brief for the Presbyterians, but it is possible that some of them would differ with the professor. However, his reply reflects the opinion held also by many a clergyman, independent of denominational connection, whose training has fostered the sub-evangelical belief which regards a benediction as sacerdotal, thus divesting it of its essential meaning—that of prayer, a universal right and duty, not confined to men of the cloth, except, as the case may be, for good, external order.

Over against the ideas exemplified in the two incidents given above, we make the following statement, which these pages intend to confirm and present as conforming to Protestant thought: The benediction is a prayer. There is no need of a clerical technician or ordained person, to the exclusion of a layman, for pronouncing it so as to make it religiously effective. It is an intercession. Its fulfilment is subject to the conditions governing all petitional prayers, whether the petitioners or those for whom the petition is made, are lay or clergy. Expediency, good order, may dictate that a clergyman ask for the benediction, but this is not religiously necessary. It is irreligious to make the blessing merely ornamental; it is sacreligious to present it as the act of an official mediator between God and man, and to exact a tax for such a presentation, even in the form of a gift.

### The Roman and Neo-Anglican View

The Roman Catholic view is the opposite of this. In the Roman Church benediction or consecration, being *sacramentalia,* instituted by the hierarchic Church with divine authority, are supposed, in their application to persons and things, to communicate *quasi ex opere operato,* through ordained priests, the grace of God, consisting in purification, supernatural revivification, and sanctification. The higher the hierarchical position of him who bestows the blessing, the more powerful it is. [1]

Essentially in unity with this teaching is Rev. William James Miller, author of *The American Church Dictionary and Cyclopedia* (1901), full of devotion to the cause of Anglican High-Churchism. He defines benediction as a "blessing such as that given at the end of Communion Office and in the Marriage Service. It is also the act of setting apart for sacred use that which is to be used in the services of the Church." He adds, that it is unbecoming to transfer from the shop to the Altar or Church articles designed for holy use without first being set apart for such purpose. A church must be consecrated; likewise new added articles must be set apart for sacred use; "and this is done by an office of Benediction. The Benediction can only be pronounced by a Bishop or a Priest." In agreement with this definition, he classifies as benediction or "Blessing of Peace," Phil. 4, 7, modified and enlarged in the Anglican service: "The peace of God, which passeth all understanding, keep your hearts and minds in the knowledge and love of God, and of his Son Jesus Christ our Lord: and the blessing of God Almighty, the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, be amongst you, and remain with you always." (End of the Communion Office). He treats, in the same way, the words ending the Episcopal form of the solemnization of Matrimony; "God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Ghost bless, preserve and keep you. The Lord mercifully with his favor look upon you, and fill you with all spiritual benediction and grace: that ye may so live together in this life, that in the world to come ye may have life everlasting."

It is to be noted that the Anglican Liturgy does not always follow the letter of Scripture. It allows some latitude of diction

[1] E. Chr. Achelis, *Benediktionen,* Herzog-Hauck, P.R.E. II. The article is abbreviated in The New Schaff-Herzog Encyclopedia of Religious Knowledge, II. 50 seq.

The derivation of "benediction" is selfevident: praise, say words kindly. The Greek equivalent = say well. The German "Segnen," of ecclesiastic origin, is derived from *signo crucis,* by the sign of the cross. Hence the Norwegian "signe." The Norwegian says: *Sign spis,* as the German Gesegnete *Mahlzeit*—a wish, originally, that the blessing of the cross may be upon the food; in reality, upon the partakers, by metonomy. The word "blessing" is derived from "blood," to consecrate by sprinkling with blood.

and, in this respect, follows the earlier Lutheran liturgies. It even modifies the Aaronic benediction in the form "Visitation of the Sick," adding "both now and evermore." It alters the words of 2 Cor. 13, 14 by substituting "us" for "you" and adding "evermore." This is of course in keeping with the Spirit and is as permissible as our addition of the doxology to the Lord's Prayer—all in harmony with evangelical liberty.

Rev. Mr. Miller does not say whether the last two cited passages are hierarchic benedictions. In his mind, they evidently are. And for the majority of Anglicans they can be nothing else. This Church, no longer the church of Phillipps Brooks, who had a fine appreciation of Luther, is the church of Bishop Gore, who in *Lux Mundi* defines it, in astonishing language, as "naturally of a piece with the Incarnation" thus agreeing with Walter Lock, who says the "Church continues the work of the Incarnation." Heinrich Boehmer, Leipzig Church historian, the keenest of Protestant authorities on Luther and on the Jesuits, the successor of Albert Hauck, has shown that the Episcopal Church of England is just about through with Protestantism. It has forgotten that its creed is a child of the Augsburg Confession and the Wittenberg Concordia, interpreting it in the Roman sense, as did Cardinal Newman in the days of the past. Boehmer finds that Adam Moehler's "Symbolik", whose specific ideas are, that the church continues the work of the incarnation of God, has made a great impression on the Anglicans, they, like the "Catholic Schleiermacher," wanted a national catholic Church without Ultramontanism, without a papal universal episcopacy. [2]

The Anglican Church of today, may, on the whole, be said to agree with Rome's interpretation of benedictions. But this Church has had men of conviction and scholarship who do not share the Rome-ward slant. In 1866 Rev. R. P. Blakeny issued the second edition of his remarkable work "The Book of Common Prayer in Its History and Interpretation" (London). This work, whose author has escaped the vigilancy of great theological reference works like The *Realencyclopaedie* of Herzog-Hauck, Meusel's *Kirchliches Handlexikon,* and *Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart,* is a storehouse of historical information. Commenting on benedic-

[2] Heinrich Boehmer, *Die Kirche Englands und der Protestantismus, in gesammelte Aufsaetze,* 1927, pp. 96, 124 seq. It is significant that this searching analysis of the Anglican Church of the present appeared in the same year as the Swedish translation of Albert Hauck's classical series of lectures on the church historical connection between Germany and England. Both these eminent church historians found that the Church of England is rapidly steering away from Protestantism, having launched its own ship of church, characteristically as distinctive from Protestantism as are the Roman Catholic and Greek Catholic Churches.

tion in the Communion Service, Blakeny shows that the first part (Phil. 4, 7) was composed for the order of communion in 1548 and the next clause was added in 1549. Continuing he says:

"There are some who regard this formula not as a prayer, but an authoritative conveyance of blessing, and they rest their opinion on the words 'Ye shall bless the children of Israel, saying unto them: The Lord bless thee,' etc. They conclude that as the apostolic benediction (2 Cor. 13, 14) is but a Christian version of the same blessing, the minister blesses by the use of this form. We answer, that the benediction recorded in Numbers 6 is itself *a prayer,* and the priest is said to bless because he invokes a blessing upon them. Just as it is said: 'He which *converteth* the sinner from the error of his way, shall *save* a soul alive,' i. e. *instrumentally.*

"The benediction, occurring at the close of the Morning or Evening Service and Litany, is *only a prayer.* It is so called in the rubric, and the minister kneels, and includes himself. The *Peace* only occurs at the end of the communion service, and the service for the 20th of June. It can not be regarded as a more effective form, or it would not be confined to the Communion Service, and that for the accession of the Queen! Why not use it in the Morning and Evening, and other Services? It is absurd to suppose that a deacon cannot pronounce it as well as the *Apostolic form.*" (p. 429)

Rev. Mr. Blakeny opposed the Romanizing church of Dr. Pusey, the chief leader of Oxford Tractarianism, who compared the *Tracts for the Times* to the bulb and ritualism to the flower. Professor Boehmer says, the Tractarians originally had the same aim as a German group had later, in a similar situation. To this group, he says, belonged such men as Wilhelm Loehe, August Vilmar, Theodor Kliefoth, August Muenchmeyer, Julius Stahl. Now, it is well known that Loehe and Kliefoth have had a great influence upon liturgical thought in the American Lutheran Church. This fact accounts for the widespread unfamiliarity in portions of this church with the view almost universally accepted by continental Lutheran theologians: that the benediction is a prayer.

### Various Forms of Benedictions

There are various forms of benediction. The oldest is the Aaronic (Numbers 6, 24-26). Much used is the *Salve,* or Salutation: "Grace to you and peace from God our Father, and the Lord Jesus Christ" (Rom. 1: 7b; 1 Cor. 1: 3 etc.). Even more used is the *Vale,* sometimes called the Apostolic *Votum* or Apostolic Benediction. "The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all."

In many churches it is the practice of the preacher, on leaving the pulpit, after concluding the sermon, to add the words of Phil. 4: 7 modified so as to read: "May the peace of God . . . keep your hearts," instead of using the future indicative: "The peace of God . . . shall keep your hearts," etc. All these statements are frequently called *verba solemnia,* whose literal rendering in public worship is, as practice shows, rather the exception than the rule. Professor E. Chr. Achelis of Marburg was of the opinion that they should all be expressed in the communicative instead of the distributive form ("us" instead of "you"), because the preacher pronouncing them is not an Old Testament Priest, and should include himself in the congregation for which he wishes God's blessing. This is evangelical thinking,[3] quite the opposite of Romanism, Tractarianism, and Neo-Lutheranism.

Let us now treat these and other *verba solemnia* beginning with the Aaronic benediction.

## I

## The Aaronic Benediction

According to Dr. H. Gunkel,[4] the Aaaronic benediction wishes (1) blessing (thriving and growth) and keeping (from misfortune); (2) the shining of the divine face (that is God's favor) and his grace; (3) the kindly countenance of God and (the most universal word) peace[5]—altogether an exuberant fulness of welfare and grace. The right to pronounce this blessing was the prerogative of Aaron and his sons (Numbers 6: 23); that is, of the priests who pronounced it from the altar, with outstretched hands, after the act of sacrifice. Through this pronouncement, the name of Jahve, thrice repeated, was "put upon the children of Israel" (Numbers 6: 27), so that the name became their lot and the blessing a reality. The Old Testament view is described in the following:

> Says R. Kittel: The words, "So shall they put my name upon the children of Israel" (the Aaronic Benediction, Numbers 6: 27), whatever its original meaning may have been, was essentially understood as a *wish or prayer, especially powerful when it came from the mouth of a priest.* (Herzog-Hauck, P.R.E. II. 153.)
>
> G. Delmar is right in saying: Centuries later, when the synagogue

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[3] E. C. Achelis, Praktische Theologie, 1912, p. 83.

In "Reformed" circles, this idea is so current, that the high school debaters' favorite "authority," Webster's Dictionary, in its definitions, includes this: "Specifically: the short prayer which closes public service; as, to give the *benediction.*"

[4] Die Religion in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Second ed., vol. I, 1.

[5] Gunkel translates "Shalom" "Heil". This German word was the greeting to the soldier that he return unhurt from war, or "whole" (Hygies, in Greek). Frans Buhl in his magnificent translation of the Old Testament into Danish renders "Shalom" = "Velfaerd" (welfare or wellbeing).

was a well-established institution, it was considered that prayer in the synagogue was especially effective. It was open all day. Regular hours for prayer and worship on week days were not observed. When ten people would appear, they would read and pray, choosing a leader. If a new person would appear, he would have to wait till nine others came, when this second group would worship, after having chosen its own leader. The leaders in prayer, of the various groups, had their places before the ark and turned their backs to the congregation. Both the reader and the congregation had their faces turned toward the temple. Great emphasis was put upon the Amen of the congregation following each benediction. It would thus make the words spoken by the leader in prayer its own words.

The benediction, called the blessing of the priests, was to be bestowed by the descendants of Aaron as often as an assemblage of Israelites for worship gave opportunity. For this purpose the descendants of Aaron who were present would station themselves between the priest who led in prayer and the arc, facing the people and with hands shoulder high. The leader spoke the blessing for them, while the congregation responded with Amen at the end of each of the three parts of the blessing. Were no priest present, in ancient times the blessing was not uttered, since it was not *regarded as a part* of the *liturgy*, but was considered as a *priestly duty*. Later it became a custom that the priestly blessing should be *petitioned* by the leader. Its execution, also later, was limited to the great festivals. Not the priestly blessing, but the prayer for peace concluded prayer worship (G. Dalman, Herzog-Hauck, P.R.E. 7, 11.)

As stated, in the course of time, the custom developed that, if there was no priest in the assembly of worship, another member who was present would pray for, though not impart, the Aaronic benediction. Though it was commonly used in the synagogue, centuries passed before it was used in the Christian Church. It was not a part of the Catholic Mass, though it had been occasionally used in the pre-reformation Church (e. g. Spain).[6] It was Luther who introduced it in the Church of the Reformation.

### The Applicative or Communicative Form

Luther in his *Formula Missae,* of 1523, says the *benedictio solita* might be given, or, in lieu of this, Numbers 6, 22, or Psalm 67, 1.[7] It is to be noted that he uses the communicative form "us" instead of "you".[8] This corresponds also to the spirit of Psalm 67, 1: "God be merciful unto us and bless us: and cause his face

[6] It was not used in the "Apostolic Constitutions." The statement of Loehe that the Church when blessing in the name of the resurrected One has always used the Mosaic Benediction, and that of Theodosius Harnack, that "the Christian Church has always—and properly so—retained the Aaronic blessing"—have been disproved. See G. Rietchel, Lehrbuch der Liturgik, I (1900), 286, 402. E. Chr. Achelis, Praktische Theologie (1912), 83.

[7] In the Formula Missae, Luther refers to Psalm 66. He follows the division of chapters in the Vulgate.

[8] "Benedicat nos dominus et custodiat nos, Ostendat nobis faciem suam et misereatur nostri, Convertat dominus faciem suam ad nos et det nobis pacem." See Carl Clemen, Quellenbuch zur praktischen Theologie, 1910, p. 30, based on Luthers Werke, Weimar ed. XII.

to shine upon us." R. Kittel well says,[9] that Psalm 67 is linked together with Numbers 6, 24 seq., which the priest used in blessing the assembly in the choir of Levites, continues the trend of the blessing, renders *thanks* and *prays for further blessings.* Luther later restored the use of the second person, not for theological or religious reasons, or because of any servile adherence to the letter, but because the church people of his day were too much wrapped up in traditional forms to make, with any degree of comfort, departures from the letter. Not regarding the liturgist as an Old Testament priest, he did not stress the literal rendition of the Aaronic benediction, nay rather, wrote a sermon about it, explaining what it *wished* for the people. [10]

As stated, Luther at first used the communicative form: "bless us and keep us" etc., which interpreted the benediction as a prayer. The custom, quite general in the Lutheran Church, which permits only to the ordained to use the unaltered, applicative form and obliges the young candidate for the ministry to use the communicative form, is a matter of decorum. The custom is the product of patriarchal thinking, which considered it as good pedagogy to keep the novitiate humble. It was also practiced in the synagogue, and is, from the evangelical standpoint, not mandatory. It possesses no more theological merit than the reasoning of the Age of Orthodoxy, which thought it was contrary to the will of God to carry on foreign missions. As a piece of decorum it suggests the spirit of discernment in the Age of the Enlightenment, which, in celebrating the communion, gave the bread to the nobility with the polite words "Nehmen Sie," and to the common man with the familiar "Nimm".

The pronouncing of the Aaronic benediction, whether by ordained or unordained, whether verbatim in the words of Scripture, or, more freely in the rime and rhythm of poetry, whether said or sung by one or many—is religiously immaterial. The saying of the benediction may, or may not, be, the climax in a service. To a tired audience it may actually, though it certainly should not, be an anticlimax. But in all instances it is a prayer direct or

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[9] Kittel, Die Psalmen, 1914, 247.

[10] Concerning the first part of this benediction, Luther says: *So wuenscht nu dieser Segen dem Volk. . . . .* Concerning the second part: *So wuenscht nu dieser Segen.* Concerning the third part: *Das dritte Stueck betrifft auch das geistlich Wesen und die Seele, und ist ein Wunsch des Trostes* und *endlichen Sieges;* Again, *Denn er wuenscht nicht allein, dass . . . . sondern,* etc.

That the name of Jahve should be used, Luther explains by saying that God forbade the blessing of idols, as if Baal were the God. It should be the blessing of God, not of an idol, Luthers Werke, E. 36. 155 seq.

intercessory, dependent on God, the sole giver, and on the receptiveness of the auditor; or, as the case may be, on the petitioner in the pew. Certainly, the chief characteristic of it is prayer, not a ministerial bestowal and a congregational receiving. Nay, it is rather God who here "receives", and the congregation that "gives," a petition for the rich blessings of gracious God.

### The Benediction Sung by the Congregation

In agreement with this idea, Bishop Jesper Svedberg (1653-1735) one of Sweden's leading hymnists, wrote one of the most beautiful closing hymns in the Church of the Scandinavian countries. It is a rendition of the Aaronic benediction, even very impressive in translation, e. g. by Norway's great hymnist. M. B. Landstad:

Herre signe du og raade
Og bevare nu os vel, etc.

The same idea underlies the singing of this blessing by the *choir,* as is the case, now and then, in the Presbyterian Church; or, though, perhaps in a less liturgical way, by the congregation's singing of "Lord, dismiss us with thy blessing" (John Fawcet) and of "May the grace of Christ our Saviour," John Newton's rendering of the apostolic benediction.

There are those who object to such paraphrases in verse, because they detract from the Word of God. But an objection of this kind makes the Word of God absolutely identical with the canonically documented word in the Old and New Testament, which, of course, are our incomparable records of God's revelation. It binds the operation of the Holy Spirit to the *form* as a sine qua non. Such an objection is little in harmony with the age of the Reformation, e. g., with Luther, who even paraphrased the Lord's Prayer for public worship; or with the main authors of the Anglican Book of Common Prayer, who paraphrased, more or less, all the *verba solemnia* in this book. In meeting the objection, there may also be some comfort in pointing to the liturgy of the Brandenburg-Nuernberg Order of 1533 by Osiander and Brentz, [11], which, barring the Visitation Articles, was more generously accepted in Germany than any other order. Beside the Aaronic benediction, this Order suggested three forms as substitutes:

"God be gracious and merciful unto us, and give his divine blessing. He cause his face to shine upon us and grant us his peace. Amen.

"Bless and keep us, God the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

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[11] A. L. Richter, Die evang. Kirchenordnungen (1846), 208 Richard —Painter, Christian Worship. Second ed. 231 seq.

"The blessing of God the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, be with you and always abide with us all. Amen."

### Views of Modern Constructive Scholarship

In confirmation of the views maintained above, testimonies may be offered from the following well-known authorities on Practical Theology, [12] especially in the field of Liturgics. Says E. Chr. Achelis: Joh. Gerhard presented the right viewpoints for the *evangelical* conception of the benediction by saying, The priests (in the Old Testament) blessed by praying for good things, God blessed by bestowing good things. Their blessing was promising, his giving. God promised that he would ratify the priestly benediction, if it was (given) according to his work and will. Consequently, as Achelis adds:

"First, It is God alone who can bless effectively; that is, can impart the divine powers of his Spirit. The evangelical Church recognizes only the powers of the Holy Spirit as supernatural forces. There is no clerical priesthood which is the carrier and possessor of divine powers and can freely dispose over them. All *human* blessing is nothing else than an *intercession* to God about imparting *his* blessing; the hearing of this intercession,—that is, the *effect* of human blessing is subject to the same divine laws as is the hearing of prayer in general. The difference between liturgical and extra-liturgical, between ecclesiastic and private blessing, is only psychological, so far as the solemn blessing of the Church, and in the name of the Church, is usually accompanied by a strong incentive for the recipient to fulfill the subjective conditions of hearing the prayer. The difference, accordingly, is never one of principle, but only gradual, dependent on circumstances.

"Secondly, only *persons* can be blessed with God's Spirit. The belief that there is a blessing of objects which make them receive supernatural power, is utterly to be rejected as belonging to the field of superstition and magic."

Another great authority of Liturgics, G. Rietschel, writes:

"It is unevangelical to conceive of the Aaronic benediction in worship as a blessing by the minister or priest, since we do not have any order of priests. The Old Testament blessing through the priesthood must not be transferred to the New Covenant. Certainly the servant of the Word who has functioned, in reciprocity with the Church, as liturgist and proclaimer of the divine Word, ultimately comes forward as the one who dismisses the congregation with an intercessory word of blessing. He does not, however, impart the blessing; nor does the Church bless through him. As a representative of the Church at large and as the called servant of the Word he prays for God's blessing for the congregation." [13]

In agreement with Achelic and Rietschel is Paul Drews:

"The great danger threatening cultic life is the fact that the cultic forms, instead of being conceived as expressions of religion, are regarded as being a part of religion itself. This holds true in the Catholic Church. But also in the evangelical field we are not secure against similar retrogressive constructions. How unevangelical are not, for

[12] E. Chr. Achelis, Lehrbuch der Praktischen Theologie, 3d ed. 1911. I, 511.

[13] G. Rietchel, Lehrbuch der Liturgik, I, 513.

example, many of our acts of consecration! How often is not the conception of the benediction a magical one?" [14]

Confirmatory of these statements of German scholars, is the statement of the Danish Church Historian, J. Oscar Andersen:

"The Reformation was in theory and practice opposed to the Catholic sacramentalia. It was strongly emphasized that the blessing of persons and objects must take place in the form of intercession, and that the mercy of God is not tied to forms or definite ecclesiastical acts. [15]

Confirmatory is also the expression of Professor Martin Schian that "the blessing has according to evangelical conception the significance of Intercession." [16]

Schian considers the blessing of confirmandi and ordinandi in the same light. "This act (blessing at confirmation), seen from the evangelical standpoint, is nothing else than an intercessory blessing: hence it is the same as the blessing of the congregation with the Aaronic benediction at every gathering for worship."

As to the laying of hands on candidates to be ordained, he says, "Of course it can only have an intercessory Character. [17] He asks whether a pastor, true to the Gospel, can use the Aaronic benediction in its original, historical meaning. [18]

Other outstanding authorities who have expressed themselves on our subject, are men like Walter Caspari and Julius Smend. Says Smend: The benediction can be nothing else than an intercession. As such, it is subject to the condition of divine fulfilment. He rejects as unevangelical all operative formularies like "I consecrate thee," "I bless thee," and he prefers a formulary as "May the blessing of God rest upon . . ." or a declarative statement like, "We declare," which is conditional. [19] Caspari, in a similar way, asserts "Blessing and consecrating belong to the field of prayer and intercession." [20]

Even sermons explicitly foster this evangelical conception. Professor Ihmels, now Bishop of the Lutheran Church of Saxony, preaching on Numbers 6, 22-27, states that to bless is the privilege and duty of every Christian. Contrasting the order of the Gospel with the special priesthood of the Old Covenant and its exclusive right to bless, he says:

"We evangelical Christians know no priest anymore. God be thanked, we do not know them any more. When the Roman Church

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[14] Paul Drews, Article "Liturgik" in R. G. G. III, 2335.

[15] Article, "Velsignelse," Nielsen, Kirche-Leksikon for Norden 75. hefte, 1927.

[16] M. Schian, Grundriss der praktischen Theologie (1922) 203.

[17] Schian, ibid 187.

[18] Schian, Der evangelische Pfarrer der Gegenwart (1914), 103.

[19] Smend, Der evangelische Gottesdienst (1904).

[20] Article, Theologie, Praktische, P.R.E. 19, 153.

still knows and has priests, this is a relapse into Old Testament thinking. In the Old Testament, indeed, all communication between God and his people is mediated through the service of priests. The priests again and again had to reconcile God by means of their sacrifices, and at the same time, had to impart the blessing which God has for his people. We know, we have, and we desire only one priest, the Great High Priest, who, with one sacrifice, perfected all that ask for it, and who, with this one sacrifice, gained, for the church, forgiveness of sins, grace, and peace with God, forever, . . . We Know that the New Testament blessing is not a mechanical process. All blessing and being-blessed must be a *prayer*. The Lord himself wishes to do the blessing. Hence all our blessing and being-blessed *can only be prayer* . . . To bless is the function of the Christian . . . If we could only learn that all blessing must be a prayer!" [21]

To close the list of scholars quoted for expressions as to the benediction, let the name of Professor Albert Hauck be mentioned, whom Archbishop Soederblom has called the greatest Church historian that Protestantism has produced. For Hauck the benediction is "Segenswunsch" (wish for, or of, blessing), or prayer. This is brought out in the wonderful chapter, The Reformation and Public Worship, in his classical book, *Die Reformation in ihrer Wirkung auf das Leben* (1918). Nothing more elucidating has been written showing the retrogatory movement of the Church from the original belief in the general priesthood to the subevangelical institute of a sacerdotium exclusively privileged to pronounce the blessing and perform consecrations.

Summing up, these scholars clearly show what the evangelical interpretation is, and must be, in regard to the pronouncing of blessings by either a minister or a socalled layman. *Realiter* every Christian has the right and duty to "bless", where his intercession is wanted. The blessing is not a rite, without which a meeting for public worship is lacking in a zenith or climax. While entirely appropriate, and very elevating, it is not a sine qua non. And the pronouncement of it by a clergyman in preference to a layman, is a matter of long usage, of perhaps defendable decorum, but not of religious need or necessity. In either case, the effect of the pronouncement is theoretically the same.

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[21] Ludwig Ihmels, Aufwaerts die Herzen (1918), 136 seq.

# JONATHAN EDWARDS

H. J. Schick, S.T.D

An adequate appreciation of the life and works of Jonathan Edwards is based upon an understanding of the religious conditions prevalent in the American Colonies in the early eighteenth century. New England was in this period in a lax state of morals. Already thirty years after the first Puritan landing at Salem, real alarm was felt by those who had noticed the steady decline in morals. Due to the fact that the early inhabitants of New England were beset by the turmoils of wars, such as the Indian raids upon the colonies, King Philip's War, King William's War, Queen Anne's War, King George's War, and the French and Indian War, and due also to the fact that immigration tends to suppress many of the social amenities of life and to roughen and corrupt the manners and morals, the country sank to a lower and lower level. Increase Mather in 1678 said:

"The body of the rising generation is a poor, perishing, unconverted and (except the Lord pour down his spirit) undone generation." (Dexter's Congregationalism in its Literature, 476).

We note also that many of the second generation of American birth had no connection of any kind with the churches. Their children were not baptized, and the population was becoming paganized.

Hand in hand with the laxity of morals went the laxity in Christian doctrine. There was little to favor orthodox Calvinism but much to favor liberal views. The general tendency was towards rationalism and Unitarianism. This was due to the influence of the English Deists, Tindal, Woolston, Morgan, Collins and Bolingbroke, and the philosophic teachings of Hobbes, Locke, Spinoza, Leibnitz, Malebranche and others. Of remarkable influence in this regard was also a book published by Thomas Emlyn in 1702, entitled: "An Humble Inquiry into the Scripture Accounts of Jesus Christ," in which he argued that Jesus Christ is not the supreme God. The work was published in Boston as late as 1756. Another writer who exerted considerable influence was William Whiston (1667-1752), who in his work, "Primitive Christianity Revived" (1711) advocated anti-Trinitarian views. More familiarly known in New England was John Taylor of Norwich whose views of original sin and of the atonement coincide with those of the early Unitarians. A fourth influential personage was Daniel Whitby (d. 1726) whose writings are Arian in character.

The state of the churches was generally characterized as lax and indifferent in Christian life. Cold and barren religious sentiments had taken possession of many minds.

At this juncture there came into action an eminently aggressive force in the person of Jonathan Edwards. He was the fifth child of Timothy and Esther Edwards, and was born in the east parish of Windsor, now East Windsor, Oct. 5, 1703. His father was a clergyman who served as a chaplain of the Connecticut troops in a military expedition, designed for Canada, and after his return served the parish at Windsor until his death, 1758, in his 89th year. The grandfather of Jonathan Edwards was Richard Edwards, Esquire (d. 1718), a merchant, only child of William and Agnes Edwards. William Edwards was also a merchant, son of the Rev. Richard Edwards, of Welsh origin, a clergyman in London in the time of Queen Elizabeth. The mother of Jonathan Edwards was Esther Stoddard, second child of the Rev. Solomon Stoddard and Esther Mather, nee Warham, youngest child of the Rev. John Warham. The maternal great-grandfather was Anthony Stoddard, of English descent.

Due to the intellectual and moral culture of his parents, Jonathan Edwards was from early infancy influenced for a high type of intellectual and moral beauty. Their faithful religious instruction rendered him conversant with God and Christ. Their own example of consistent and devoted piety led Jonathan Edwards along the same path of loving service and faithful devotion to God and his Kingdom. In consequence of the faithful instructions and prayers of his parents, he was in several instances the subject of strong religious impressions, particulary so some years before he went to college, during a powerful revival of religion in his father's congregation.

When six years of age, Jonathan Edwards began the study of Latin, and proved himself a diligent scholar. His intellectual interests which engaged his opening mind are noteworthy. His paper on the habits of the spider, written in his childhood, reveals extraordinary talent in the study of nature. Before he was thirteen, he entered Yale College (1716) and at fourteen he was reading Locke's "Essay upon the Human Understanding," and enjoying a far higher pleasure in the perusal of its pages" than the most greedy miser finds when gathering up handfuls of silver and gold from some newly discovered treasure." While at College he was distinguished for the "uniform sobriety and the correctness of his behavior, for diligent application to his studies and for rapid and thorough attainments in learning."

Edwards brought from his studies competent learning, the matured fruits of original thinking, marked independence and entire candor of mind, exceptional acuteness and thoroughness, and chief of all the unquenched fire of native genius of a high order.

His mind possessed also in a large degree the power of spiritual intuition, characteristic of his Welsh ancestry. He seemed to behold spiritual truths by direct vision. And he was eminently a man of prayer, of intimate communion with God as his Father and Friend.

During his preparation for the ministry Edwards formulated a series of resolutions, seventy in all, They were intended to regulate his own heart and life. All were written before Edwards was twenty years of age. Let us note some of them in order that we may better understand the earnestness and sincerity of Edwards.

"(5) Resolved, Never to lose one moment of time, but to improve it in the most profitable way I possibly can.

(6) Resolved, To live with all my might, while I do live.

(7) Resolved, Never to do anything, which I should be afraid to do, if it were the last hour of my life.

(17) Resolved, That I will live so, as I shall wish I had done, when I come to die.

(20) Resolved, To maintain the strictest temperance, in eating and drinking.

(28) Resolved, To study the Scriptures so steadily, constantly, and frequently, as that I may find, and plainly perceive myself to grow in the knowledge of the same.

(37) Resolved, To enquire every night, as I am going to bed, Wherein I have been negligent,—What sin I have committed, and wherein I have denied myself; also, at the end of every week, month and year.

(42) Resolved, Frequently to renew the dedication of myself to God, which was made at my baptism, which I solemnly renewed, when I was received into the communion of the church, and which I have solemnly re-made this 12th day of January, 1723.

(43) Resolved, Never, henceforth, till I die, to act as if I were in any way my own, but entirely and altogether God's.

(70) Let there be something of benevolence, in all that I speak."—

Concerning these seventy resolutions it has been said that they are the best uninspired summary of Christian duty, the best directory to high attainments in evangelical virtue which the mind of man has hitherto been able to form.

In connection with these resolutions let us note a few excerpts from the Diary of Edwards, begun Dec. 18, 1722, when he was 19 years of age.

Wednesday, Jan. 2. Dull. I find by experience, that, let me

make Resolutions, and do what I will, with never so many inventions, it is all nothing, and to no purpose at all, without the motions of the Spirit of God—There is no dependence on myself. Our resolutions may be the highest one day, and yet the next day, we may be in a miserable dead condition, not at all like the same person who resolved. So that it is to no purpose to resolve, except we depend on the grace of God.

Saturday evening, Jan. 5.—This week I have been unhappily low in the weekly account—and what are the reasons of it?—abundance of listlessness and sloth.—It used to appear to me that I had not much sin remaining; but now I perceive that there are great remainders of sin. Where may it not bring me to, if God should leave me?

Wednesday, Jan. 9. How deceitful is my heart! I take up a strong resolution, but how soon doth it weaken.

Saturday, Jan. 12. I have been before God, and have given myself, all that I am and have to God; so that I am not in any respect my own.

Friday afternoon, June 21. I have abundant cause, O my merciful Father, to love thee ardently, and greatly, to bless and praise thee, that thou hast heard me, in my earnest request, and so hast answered my prayer for mercy, to keep me from decay and sinking.

One cannot help but marvel at the earnestness of Edwards as one glimpses in these excerpts from his Resolutions and his Diary his rigid self-examination. What a commentary also on Paul's great dissertation on the law, the flesh and the spirit, as found in Romans, chapter seven.

Edwards graduated from Yale at the age of 17 (1720), and for the next two years he resided at the college, preparing himself for the work of the ministry. He was licensed to preach in the Summer of 1722, and was placed in charge of a parish in New York. After eight months of pastoral work he returned to New Haven in September, 1723, to receive his degree of Master of Arts. He was thereupon elected as tutor in the College. His period of tutorship was one of great difficulty, due largely to the upheaval caused by the revolt of the College against the legal government, the universal insurrection of the students and the severance of the connection of Mr. Cutler, one of the tutors, with the College.

On February 15, 1727, Jonathan Edwards was ordained as a minister of the Gospel and placed over the church and congregation at Northampton, as the colleague of his grandfather, the Rev. Solomon Stoddard, who departed this life in 1729. Two years prior

to the death of Rev. Stoddard, Edwards was married at New Haven, July 28, 1727, to Miss Sarah Pierrepont, daughter of Rev. James Pierrepont, "an eminent, pious and useful minister at New Haven." She is described as a woman of wonderful beauty, sweetness, calmness and universal benevolence of mind, and of great piety. It was a union founded on high personal esteem and on a mutual affection, which increased with the years. Eleven children were born unto them.

For the first years of his pastoral work in Northampton nothing occurs that would mark his work as in any sense peculiar.

The more special work of Edwards began when in 1734 he preached a sermon on "Justification by Faith." This sermon initiated his first revival, and thus began a new epoch in American religious life. The Revival began in the Spring of 1735. According to Edwards' "Narrative:"

"The work of God, as it was carried on, and the number of true saints multiplied, soon made a glorious alteration in the town, so that in the spring and summer, anno 1735, the town seemed to be full of the presence of God. It was never so full of love, nor so full of joy, and yet so full of distress, as it was then. There were remarkable tokens of God's presence in almost every house. It was a time of joy in families on account of salvation's being brought unto them; parents rejoicing over their children as being new-born, and husbands over their wives, and wives over their husbands. The goings of God were then seen in his sanctuary. God's day was a delight, and his tabernacles were amiable. Our public assemblies were then beautiful; the congregation was alive in God's service, every one intent on the public worship, every heart eager to drink in the words of the minister as they came from his mouth; the assembly in general were from time to time in tears while the Word was preached, some weeping with sorrow and distress, others with joy and love, others with pity and concern for the souls of their neighbors. Our public praises were then greatly enlivened; God was then served in our psalmody in some measure in the beauty of holiness."

Hardly a single person, old or young, but felt concerned about eternal things. About three hundred persons were converted. In this revival Edwards preached sermons prompting his hearers to immediate action, as over against the practice of the "half-way covenant" which advocated awaiting God's time of grace. Edwards also preached boldly against the heresies of his day, assailing Arminianism which had largely taken possession of the churches.

The influence of the revival was felt in the whole region of

the Connecticut Valley, in Massachusetts and Connecticut and neighboring regions. The fame of it went abroad. After six months, however, the interest abated. Another revival followed in 1740 which continued two years. Thousands entered upon the new life. Historians estimate the number from 2500 to 50,000. During the revival the people of New England turned to the subject of religion as at no other time in the history of the country.

As the reports of the revival interest spread through the land the feelings of the people were much aroused. In public services men and women often fainted or cried out in terror. Scenes of confusion often prevailed. Schisms also resulted. The entire country was agitated. Central in the agitated scene is the calm figure of Edwards, uniting the faith and zeal of an apostle with the acuteness of a philosopher, and applying the exquisite powers of his intellect to discriminate between a divine work and its human or Satanic admixtures, and between true and spurious affections.

The question as to the value and good of the revival and whether it should be promoted or repressed, became prominent. In 1742 Edwards published "Thoughts on the Revival in New England" which was an elaborate defense of the revival. As the treatise was published before the most objectionable demonstrations appeared, Edwards was severely critized that he had not presented the entire case. Among his critics was Dr. Charles Chauncey of Boston whose work "Seasonable Thoughts on the State of Religion in New England" is a careful statement of facts collected from every part of New England. Confessedly, he aims to present the worst features of this revival in order to show the evils thereof. On the other hand the revival had its warm advocates, as is evidenced by a meeting of many pastors in Boston, July 7, 1743, who issued a statement declaring the revival a marked work of divine grace, and deploring the accounts which would discredit the revival.

In September 1743 Edwards had formed the acquaintance of David Brainerd, a missionary to the Indians. In March, 1747 Brainerd in consequence of ill health took leave of the work in New Jersey and came into New England. Edwards invited him to make his abode in his own house. There he died October 9, 1749. Brainerd left to the care of Edwards his diary to dispose of as he thought best. Edwards decided to publish it in connection with a brief memoir of his life. The book made a profound impression. It was found in almost every country parsonage, but its influence was especially felt in the colleges, which had now become the seats of serious and religious learning.

In the Northampton parish Edwards was for many years unusually happy in the esteem and love of his people. His uniform

kindness, and that of Mrs. Edwards, had won the affection of his people, while his published works had gained for him a reputation at home and abroad. Unfortunately, however, matters changed. In 1744 Edwards estranged the youth of his parish through an endeavor to investigate the conduct of some of their number who were said to have circulated obscene and licentious literature. A considerable number of the most influential families of the town were drawn into hostility to Edwards through this affair. Later, in 1749, when Edwards voiced his opinion on the lax mode of admitting members into the church and required a more explicit profession of godliness, a great ferment in the town was raised which finally led to Edwards' dismissal in 1750. He left Northampton in sorrow of heart and gave his incomparable powers to the work of the Gospel among the Stockbridge Indians. While at Stockbridge he wrote his "Freedom of the Will" (1754), "Nature of Virtue" (1755) and "Original Sin" (1758). Enemies sought to disturb and destroy the work of the mission at Stockbridge, but they were defeated in their evil designs, and the work of the Mission flourished.

Upon the death of President Aaron Burr (1757), Edwards was called to the presidency of Princeton College, which offer Edwards after some hesitancy accepted. In January, 1758, he assumed the duties of the presidential office. As the smallpox was spreading throughout that region and had also come to Princeton, it was thought wise to inoculate Edwards (Feb. 13). For a time all went well, but a secondary fever set in and raged till it put an end to his life, March 22, 1758, in the 55th year of his age." He died with as much calmness and composure, to all appearance, as that with which one goes to sleep."—

Jonathan Edwards absorbed and embodied the best thinking of his time. Although he adopted the creed of his denomination and in a general way adhered to it through life, yet his earnest studies and researches led him to enlarge and modify some views of truth and so to introduce some changes into the current theology. He was the source of the "new divinity," in that his friends and pupils, prompted and guided by his teachings defended and advocated the scheme of doctrine which bore that name. Historically, a new period begins with him. Later New England theology, so far as it is recognized as orthodox and evangelical, points back to him as to the radiating center. The system of theology known as New England Theology, properly begins with Edwards. His freedom of thought, his philosophical principles, his religious fervor, and his anxiety to see new life infused into the churches of the country gave the impetus to that thinking which later on after

a slow development is known as the New England scheme. He effected changes in practical theology, in current metaphysical speculations and in doctrinal theology. Let us briefly note them in turn.

In practical theology he stressed the duty of immediate and energetic effort in seeking salvation. "By pressing onward and persevering," he said, "you will at last, as it were by violence, take the Kingdom of heaven." (From Sermon, "Pressing into the Kingdom of God," anno 1735). Edwards did not teach that the impenitent could save themselves, but he urged them to take such a position that the grace of God would probably reach them.

In regard to full church membership Edwards in the course of time became opposed to "Stoddardism," a practice of receiving the unregenerate to full communion, on the ground that the Lord's Supper is a converting ordinance. Edwards held that church membership required acceptance of the doctrines of grace by the heart as well as by the intellect. His views led, as we have seen, to his dismissal from his parish. As he was not permitted to preach on the subject, he resorted to the press in self-defense and published: "An Humble Inquiry into the Rules of the Word of God concerning the Qualifications requisite to a Complete Standing and Full Communion in the Visible Christian Church." (Oct. 1749). Although Edwards could not effect reinstatement for himself through this publication, yet he did much towards rescuing the churches from laxity of doctrine.

Regarding his work in current metaphysical speculations Edwards ranks high. He wrote much. However, if he could have been the editor of his own works and harmonized views taken from different standpoints, and adjusted parts of his writings the worth of his works would have been increased. He has given us his conception of the Deity in his treatise on "God's Last End in the Creation." He says the last end in the creation is God's glory. He begins with the idea that God exists in all the fullness of perfections, with a disposition to manifest his perfections. This diffusive disposition of God is the basis of the creation. In the creation God diffuses himself into outward manifestation. God's internal glory is his understanding and his will. His external glory is the emanation of his internal glory. When he communicates his excellence to men he imparts to the understanding a knowledge of himself, and to the will, holiness, which is a love of himself, and happiness, which is a joy in himself.

Regarding Virtue Edwards taught that it is "that consent, propensity and union of heart to Being in general, that is immediately exercised in a general good will." (II. p. 262) The virtue

of man is like that of God. He loved Being, when there was nothing else to love, before created things existed; man must have the same disposition. And it must be love of Being in general, for a partial love has not the perfect beauty that belongs to the love of the whole.

In Doctrinal Theology Edwards wrote upon the Will in opposition to the Arminians; and upon Original Sin in opposition to the Pelagians. His most noted work is on the Will, and is entitled: "A Careful and Strict Inquiry into the Modern Prevailing Notions of that Freedom of Will which is supposed to be essential to moral agency, virtue and vice, reward and punishment, praise and blame." It was published in 1754.

Anent Original Sin Edwards set forth his views in his work. "The Great Christian Doctrine of Original Sin defended; evidences of its truth produced." It is the last of his treatises prepared for publication and was passing through the press at the time of his death in 1758. It is directed against Pelagianism which denies the depravity of human nature. Edwards teaches that men are "either born guilty and so are chargeable with sin before they come to act for themselves, or else commit sin immediately, without the least time intervening, after they are capable of understanding their obligation to God and reflecting on themselves." (II., p. 327.) How do men become possessed of original sin? In accord with the divine constitution the race is one person and is guilty of the first transgression. The pollution of the race, which is original sin, is the extended pollution of Adam resulting from his sin at the fall. God imputes Adam's sin to each of his descendents because each is guilty. The pollution of each one is a fact, obvious to those who read our nature aright, and is the ground of the imputation of Adam's sin. The imputation is mediate, not immediate. It has a justifying reason in our corrupt nature.

In conclusion, let us briefly sum up the services Edwards rendered:

Edwards found New England morally decadent. He was instrumental in bringing about a profound spiritual change, an awakened moral sense, the joy of a new life, vigorous and fruitful. His intensely earnest sermons, his holy life and his unceasing prayers in a time of spiritual and moral depression, produced the "Great Awakening." But for this new infusion of religious life, it is doubtful whether the churches would have survived the storm and stress of the intense political and war-like agitation which came upon them and held them in its grip for more than thirty years.

Edwards found ecclestical discipline relaxed under the system of the "Half-way Covenant." He overthrew that secularizing sys-

tem, and strengthened the cords that bound earnest quickened believers into one body. Thus the insweeping tide of the secularization of the church was stemmed.

Edwards found New England un-theological. With the quickening of religious feeling and the deepening of religious conviction, theological opinions were clarified and defined. Edwards stimulated inquiry and inspired men to deepest research. A new chapter of American religious thought begins with him. His influence lived on in his disciples, Bellamy and Hopkins, continued down to the middle of the nineteenth century, and later, through different lines, ending in Emmons of Franklin, Taylor of New Haven, Finney of Oberlin, and Edwards A. Park of Andover. Verily, a man of God was Jonathan Edwards.

In the compilation of the above Life of Jonathan Edwards the writer is greatly indebted to the following sources:

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# AN ATTEMPT TO DEFINE THE RIGHT ATTITUDE TOWARD THE CONFESSIONS OF THE REFORMATION

By Rev. H. Niefer

At the Extraordinary General Conference, October, 1927, our Confessional Paragraph was under fire. The very storm-center of the heated discussion was the reference to the "Symbolical Books of the Lutheran and Reformed Churches," among which as being the most important the "Augsburg Confession and Luther's and the Heidelberg Catechism" are mentioned by name.

Quite a divergence of conflicting opinions emerged regarding this confessional statement. There was one group that advocated the elimination of all and any reference to the Confessions of the Reformation, insisting that we should simply go back to the Bible, and base our confession on Christ and the original Gospel. These dear brethren, although with good intentions, lost sight of the fact that this is an absolute impossibility. Eighteen centuries of Christian history and development lie between us and the writing of the Scriptures. Are we to believe that these centuries bequeathed to us no spiritual and religious values to be conserved and developed, that they represent a mere period of stagnation or retrogression lamentably forsaken by God? We protest most emphatically against any such insinuation. On the contrary we assert with firm conviction that these centuries were well under the guidance and supervision of God, who is the God of history, a God ever moving forward, ever surprising us with new aspects and sublime visions of His revelation in Jesus Christ. Indeed there must be an historical continuity. The eternal lines that God has written in the past must be taken up into the present and into the future, if the Church is to be a real unified and developing organism embodying and realizing an ever increasing divine purpose. If the historical continuity is given up, if the eternal values of the past are no longer conserved, we have no church any more in the true sense of the word, but only a kaleidoscopic succession of a number of petty separate church bodies without connection or interrelation; there is then no Church History any more but only a motly medley of the histories of the separate churches relating the melancholy story of their rise and downfall. Thus we are committed to the dismal theory of Spengler layed down on his "Downfall of Western Civilization" according to which there exists no longer *one, great, coherent History,* of the World as a *whole,* realizing a great increasing divine purpose, moving toward one glorious goal and being "the living garment of God," no, there exist only the somber and tragic

histories of the rise and downfall of a number of absolutely separate and independent civilizations which grow up, last for a little while, go down and make place for others. History thus has no deeper meaning. "Change and decay in all around I see."

Another group was in favor of incorporating into our Confessional Paragraph the confessions of all the great and recognized Protestant Church bodies who acknowledge Christ, the Son of God as their Redeemer. There, too, we beg to dissent. In the first place it would also involve the sacrifice of historical continuity. In the second place it would mean the giving up our ecclesiastical individuality, our continued existence as a Church, separate and distinct from others, would then no longer be justified. Furthermore, a confessional statement so broad and inclusive, indeed, would be no confession at all in the proper and recognized sense of the word. Finally it is really impossible. How could we, to cite some instances stand for and practice Infant Baptism, and at the same time, accepting the tenets of the Baptists, reject it? How can we, retaining the historical chacter and status of our church, incorporate into our Confessional Paragraph the "Apostolic Succession" of the Episcopal Church, and the doctrine of "Predestination" as propounded by the extreme Calvinistic churches? No, the inclusion of all Protestant Confessions is a veritable Utopian policy.

Although it was not voiced on the floor of the conference, we may be sure that there was a third group who said: Why should we have a Confessional Paragraph at all? Can we not do without it since genuine religion is not a theory, a rule, but a *life,* the vital things being not loyalty to confession and creeds but first hand inner experience? Did the first Christians possess a stereotyped confession or creed? Surely not. What they believed was not a formulated creed or confession, but a God-inspired passion in their hearts. Christian religion meant for them essentially fellowship with the living God revealed in Christ.

While we readily admit that genuine Christianity is essentially a life and a first-hand experience, we still maintain that especially the church as such cannot dispense with clear and definite expressions and formulations of Christian truth. It cannot get along without them else its sublime truths might evaporate into a haze of subjective religious notions and emotions. The sublime, eternal realities must be embodied in definite forms of thought, or in other words, our religious experience must be expressed in definite and distinct concepts. We need these clear concepts for our own selves in order to penetrate more deeply into Christian truth, and to appropriate it more fully; and we also need them to impart Christian truth to our fellow men. Vague, pious emotion and sentiments

and good works are not sufficient. Indeed, a real church needs creeds and confessional statements. She needs them that she might not lose sight of the important and fundamental questions and problems she has to solve; she needs them that she might not suffer from want of continuity; she needs them that it might not be left to the individual to form confessions on his own account which, in view of the perversity and lack of education of many individuals, would mean anarchy and very often scepticism; she needs them to curb license and wild speculation and hold the individual within proper bounds, she needs them to have something to start from, something to be guided by, something that constitutes the bond of Christian unity.

There is a threefold attitude that we may take toward the Confessions of the Reformation.

In the first place we may regard them as infallible and absolutely binding in every detail, imposed by a undebatable authority. We may regard them as the jurist must regard his code of laws, every paragraph of which he must accept as decisive and final whether he approves of it or not. Thus the confessions are to be accepted as a final standard, every particle of which must enter into our preaching and religious instruction whether we agree with it or not, although it is desirable that we agree with it; nevertheless this is of only secondary importance. The principal thing is that we enforce and defend the confessions in toto coelo.

Now this orthodox attitude implies that the formulation of Christian truth and doctrine at the end of the 16th century was absolutely final, the last Word of God, no longer subject to emendation or revision. The church thus becomes the mere somber guardian of an infallible orthodox creed; theology, the queen of sciences, is turned into a dreary unprogressive and unfruitful Scholasticism; the spiritual death and stagnation which blighted the Greek Church after the great period of dogmatic speculation, threatens Protestant religion. So this is an attitude we cannot approve of.

*The second attitude* toward the confession might be termed the attitude of *immanent correction* of the confessional statements. The term "correction" implies that there are things in them that need to be corrected. The term "immanent" implies that all corrections must be made in full harmony and correspondence with the fundamental principle upon which these confessions are based, and that they are not to be based upon any principle which is brought to bear upon them or judge them from the *outside*. According to this attitude only such corrections are admissable as do not impair or minimize the normative, authoritative and final char-

acter of the confessions. Of what nature are they? They may be of a twofold nature. In the first place they may consist in evolving theretofore unrealized possibilities and viewpoints involved in the original deposit; in the second place, since the confessions claim to be grounded on the Scriptures and since they do not want to impose anything contrary to the clear teaching of the Bible, corrections based upon a clear understanding of the doctrinal content of the Holy Writ may be permitted. But let us realize that all changes and corrections are not supposed to affect and alter in the least the so-called "fundamentals" of the confessions, an assumption which seems to us untenable.

*The third attitude,* which we regard as the only and possible one is what we may term the *historical-religious* attitude. This attitude is the only one which does full justice to the real character of the confessions, which are on the one side the outcome, the product of peculiar *historical conditions,* on the other side a deposit of *religious experience.* Taking this historical-religious attitude it is no longer demanded that we, children of our age, accept the confessional tenets in toto coelo, and regard them final and binding in every detail; neither shall we be satisfied with some inferior immanent changes, and the attempt to harmonize them a little more with the Bible, but we demand the right to understand and accept them as *historically-conditioned;* we reserve for us the Evangelical privilege to penetrate to what is behind the merely human and historical element, to what is their infinite background: *the experience of the living God in Christ,* the original *God-inspired intention* of the framers of the Confessions.

The historical-religious attitude holds that no confession, no creed can be final, nor that any absolute doctrine can be expressed in human words. It agrees with Bacon who says: "Words cannot match the subtility of things," and with Goethe who remarks: "The highest cannot be spoken."

Christian faith is the same in all ages, and to assert this unity of faith is the object of the confession. But this unity is one of *aim* and *spirit* rather than *intellectual content.* We must by all means penetrate to the revelation of God and the divine truths and principles of salvation, that the authors of these venerable old formulas *experienced.* In fact, he would manifest the right attitude toward the Confession who would demonstrate *why* the framers were compelled to express their faith just in *this form,* and what the divine reality and eternal truth really is that found expression just in *these formulae.* Yet, he would render the greatest service to his church who could translate the eternal truth contained in the Confessions with the same force, conviction and clarity into

the thought, language and life of today as they were translated by the venerable fathers to their generation.

Such translation would not mean a radical or intrinsical change of the confessional statements, but rather a freeing them from their own limitations and inconsistencies and the giving of a fuller life to the eternal ideas that constitute their value. In translating our creed in this spirit we would find ourselves in full agreement with the method and policy of Jesus, who took the statements concerning "righteousness" and Kingdom of God" which had a definite meaning for the churchmen of his day and gave them a new and deeper meaning, and, being charged with destroying religion, he in reality *fulfilled* it.

Now, what is required of those that attempt to translate the confessional statements into the thought, life, and language of today? In the first place they must be men of keen historical sense and thorough, comprehensive historical knowledge; for it is only in view of the historical situation which give birth to them that these Confessions can be correctly understood. In the second place they must be men of faith and profound religious convictions, men who live and move in the spirit that produced these great monuments of faith. In the third place they must be men who thoroughly understand, and intelligently interpret, and profoundly sympathize with the religious movements, problems and needs of our present age. In the fourth place the men who attempt to translate the Confession should not sit down together to formulate their own *religious* ideas and convictions, but should to the best of their ability, try merely to *voice* the religious convictions and needs of the present epoch. Let us realize that a real confession is not *made* or *manufactured,* but *born* out of the religious problems, perplexities and travails of the respective epoch.

What is then from a true Evangelical viewpoint the *nature* and *purpose* of a confessional paragraph? It is not to be a permanent, infallible and rigid test of faith, nor an instrument of ecclesiastical separation and distinction, but a bond of Christian union and a guide into fuller and deeper truth.

As to our Confessional Paragraph it might be the wisest policy not to discard it or rewrite it. It seems hazardous to break the old receptacle before the salvage of its precious content is secured. It involves a great risk to let go established values for untried theories. Instead of discarding the old Confessional Paragraph or rewriting it, more satisfaction and greater unity might be secured by preserving the original with *free interpretation* and *loyalty* to its *aim* and *spirit,* and by incorporating into our Constitution a paragraph which translates the faith of our fathers and

the aims and spirit of their confessional statements into the thought, life and language of our present age. In this paragraph we might define our confessional attitude towards the religious movements, crises, developments, problems, types of belief and needs of our present generation. But even then let us beware of setting down this paragraph as a final standard. If our Confession is not to become a fossil, it must continually be translated. In a church which is spiritually alive the confessional tenets must never become an unchanging deposit of the past, but must be ever in the *making*. The true Evangelical Christian recognizes *only one* as infallible and unchangable and that is *God*. Basing on the saying of Jesus: "There is none good, but one, that is, *God*," we say: There is none infallible, but one, that is, *the living God*.

In conclusion let us regard the Confession neither as a final standard and unchangeable deposit of the past, nor a mere fossil of days gone by, no longer of intrinsic value to us, but as a great and precious heritage of the fathers, which lays upon us the sacred duty and obligation to do what the fathers did, namely to appropriate, elaborate, and develop it, and leave to the future generations *our* monuments of faith. Let us, like true miners, delve into the mines of the past seeking and bringing to light its treasures of genuine religious gold and minting it into the coin which our age needs. Let us feel ourselves bound to our Confessions but in such a way that we live and move in them not as the prisoner in his cell, but as the free son in his father's house.

# WHY GO, WHY NOT STAY?

By Peter the Hermit

This nom-de-plume is assumed so that the reader may forget the author but remember his message.

The message is, in part, comment and question to voices heard at times, most recently in the article, "Will it be Luther or Calvin?" appearing in the "Theological Magazine," Vol. 56, No. 2, Page 131 ff.

The effort to catalog the reasons so far advanced and favoring the union of our *Evangelical Synod of North America* with some other and larger religious body or denomination has produced the following more or les pertinent points.

1) We are a small denomination, hence handicapped in many ways;

2) We have had relatively small growth in number of adherents;

3) We have been conservative in number and type of enterprises;

4) Being a "Union" church, we seem to lack "individuality";

5) For the same reason, there is little "historical antecedent" or reason;

6) We have no specific, discriminating doctrines;

7) We have no specific incentive;

8) We have no exceptional educational institutions or outstanding minds;

9) We have no comprehensive or perfect scheme of organization;

10) We have no definite program of work.

Correct or incorrect, and without further study or argumentation, it seems that the above ten points are actually *"confessions."* They appear to be the confesions of an *"Insufficiency"* as deplored by some.

But a closer study of these points and of past internal synodical history seems to indicate not *"Insufficiency"* but *"inefficiency."*

If the thoughts cataloged above are based on facts, we who make the statements and we about whom these statements are made have been remiss, are remiss, and, may be, will remain remiss, even under different surroundings, in the discharge of our simplest duties as Christians and members of an organized body of Christians.

Why, then, should we go elsewhere? Why not remain and do our duty?

The author is not ready to admit that the past of our Synod

has been without some, and, perhaps, very definite profit to the Kingdom. The author admits some of the failings and shortcomings of our synodical fathers and of our present generation. The author recognizes some things left undone and others which might have been done more skillfully. The author also admits the superiority of other denominations in the various lines of ecclesiastical and theological, educational and literary effort. But the author is not blind to the limitations of the larger denominations, to their failures, and to their shortcomings. Some of these larger denominations also make "confessions" to their constituency both in private and in public. Their very "forward movement," whatever the local denominational slogan and title, are such bold "confessions."

Why go elsewhere? Why unite with those suffering pro rata from the same maladies? Why not stay at home, learn from others, and do something worth while?

For, if we go, i. e., merge with others, we will need to relinquish these things: First—the principles and reasons for our organization as a separate church body; Second—the very ideal of "unity" between two great discordant church bodies, and, becoming a part of one of these two discordant bodies, will need to promote discord instead of unity; Third—the very principle of the "Evangel" or Gospel of Jesus Christ by emphasizing the dictum of some leader,

The author is not unmindful of the fact that similar arguments, perhaps in varied forms, have been introduced otherwise when new alliances and mergers of church bodies were being effected. They may seem platitudes to some. The subject of church and denominational mergers has been most interesting to the author. He has seen and heard much pro and con, has witnessed conflict, experimentation, success and failure, also the heroic struggle of some who would not merge when ordered to do so by their erstwhile superiors. One question will not down, Why merge? Why go; why not stay and do a bit of constructive work of your own for the Christ and His Kingdom?

Honestly, Brethren, must we go? Is there no reason for remaining what we are and overcoming the very things we charge ourselves with? We had an opportunity to make a bold stroke when our constitution was undergoing repairs. We could have recast the present and the future into an efficient labor for the Lord of the church. Time and again suggestions have been offered and considered but without aggressive effort and active cooperation. Sometimes it has been our conservatism which held us back, sometimes the fear to undertake something new, and sometimes something worse than fear!

Why go? Why not remain and do something?

# Die konfessionelle lutherische Theologie.

Von Professor Dr. R. H. Grützmacher.

Die neuere lutherische Theologie wurzelt in einem Aufblühen des religiösen Lebens, der Erweckungsbewegung, die mit ihrem Gewichtlegen auf Sünde und Gnade die Grundelemente der urchristlichen und reformatorischen Erlösungsreligion wieder belebte und in sittlicher Hinsicht die Aktivität hauptsächlich auf das Reich Gottes richtet. Diese religiösen Erlebnisse waren zunächst unabhängig von den Urkunden und Aussagen der lutherischen Kirche und sonderlich von ihren Bekenntnisschriften gemacht. Der Ausgangspunkt war ein subjektiv unmittelbarer, nicht ein objektiv überlieferter. Aber einzelne Männer haben bewußt zur Reformation zurückgelenkt und die subjektive Erneuerung des religiösen Lebens mit dem objektiven Gehalt der Reformation verbunden. In stärkster Ablehnung des Rationalismus ist dies in den berühmten 95 Thesen von Claus Harms, einem Kieler Prediger, 1817 geschehen. Dieses innerliche Hineinwachsen in das objektive Luthertum haben besonders auch die Begründer der Erlanger Theologie Harleß und Thomasius geschildert. Sie erklären: Wir waren längst Lutheraner, ehe wir es wußten. Wir erfuhren mit Rührung, daß der Gehalt unsers persönlichen Erlebens zugleich der Inhalt des lutherischen Bekenntnisses sei. So ging der Weg nicht vom objektiven Bekenntnis zur Religion, sondern von der subjektiven Religiosität zum Bekenntnis als Zeugnis des eigenen Erlebens, welches man wesentlich ebenso formuliert hätte, wie es schon die Väter getan hatten. Diese Verbindung mit den objektiven Schöpfungen der Reformation beschränkte sich nicht auf die Bekenntnisschriften, sondern bezog sich ebenso auf Luthers Werke, auf die Erbauungs- und Gesangbücher, auf die liturgischen Formeln und kirchlichen Ordnungen. Das Subjektive verband sich mit dem Objektiven, das Persönliche mit dem Allgemeinen.

Die Lutherische Kirche begann wieder lebendig zu werden. Praxis und Theorie konzentrierten ihr gesamtes Interesse auf die Kirche. Man suchte ihre äußere Ordnung wieder aufzubauen, besonders ihr Gottesdienstliches Leben durch Rückkehr zu den alten Liturgien und Gesangbüchern. Aber auch die Rechtsordnung der Kirche suchte man nach innen wie nach außen wieder herzustellen. Bekenntnisverpflichtung wurde wieder eingeführt. Vor allem aber handelt es sich um eine Neuordnung des Verhältnisses von Kirche und Staat und zwar in der Richtung auf eine größere Selbständigkeit der Kirche. Eine der ersten wissenschaftlichen Zeitschriften des erneuerten Luthertums trägt den Titel: Zeitschrift für Protestantismus und Kirche, der kurz dahin erläutert wurde: „Wir wollen keinen Protestantismus ohne Kirche, aber auch keine Kirche ohne Protestantismus."

## I.

## Die lutherische Repristinationstheologie.

Auf Grund dieser religiösen Bewegung und des kirchlichen Neubaus erhob sich eine lutherische Theologie, um diese Tatbestände in wissenschaftlicher Form darzustellen. Innerhalb ihrer entstanden zwei Haupttypen, die man kurz also die Repristinationstheologie und als die Erlanger lutherische Theologie bezeichnen kann. Die erstere wollte im Wesentlichen das in der Zeit des Rationalismus und der Aufklärung verschüttete **religiöse und kirchliche Gut auch in den wissenschaftlichen Formen der lutherischen Theologie des 16. und 17. Jahrhunderts wieder aufleben lassen.** Dieses Ziel spricht besonders deutlich aus der Marburger Professor **Vilmar** (1800—1868) in seiner Schrift: „Die Theologie der Tatsachen wider die Theologie der Rethorik" (1856). „Die Theologie soll wissen, daß sie nichts Neues zu sagen, nichts Neues zu entdecken habe, daß vielmehr ihre Aufgabe nur die sei, das in der Heiligen Schrift niedergelegte, von der Kirche aufgenommene Seeligkeitsgut zu bewahren und so an die künftigen Diener der Kirche zu überliefern, daß dieselben in den vollständigen, unverkürzten, sichern, handlichen und möglichst leichtesten Besitz dieses Gutes gelangen." Die Forderung Vilmars war im Grund nur die Anwendung des Programms der Romantik auf die Theologie und somit auch nicht unabhängig von einer allgemeinen geistigen Zeitströmung. Wie man im Katholizismus im Mittelalter alles Licht sah und darum zu ihm zurückkehrte, wie man sich auf nationalem Gebiet den älteren nationalen Literaturschöpfungen zuwandte, wie man im Recht das geschichtlich gewordene Recht bevorzugte, so sollte auch die lutherische Theologie zu den von den Vätern ererbten Gut zurückkehren, es nur bewahren und weiter überliefern, damit es für die kommende Generation möglichst bequem und leicht zu besitzen wäre.

Dieses Programm wurde auf den verschiedensten Gebieten der christlichen Theologie durchzuführen versucht, zunächst in den biblischen Disziplinen und hier wieder beim **Alten Testament.** Die letztere Aufgabe leistete in den Jahren von 1830—1870 mit einer Reihe von Schülern **E. W. Hengstenberg.** Er trat für die Echtheit aller biblischen Schriften im Sinn der kirchlichen, beziehungsweise der Rabbinischen Tradition ein, so für die Abfassung der fünf Bücher des Pentateuch durch Moses, des Hohen Liedes durch Salomo; sodann erschien das ganze Alte Testament als eine Weissagung, die schon alle wesentlichen christlichen Hauptgedanken enthält wie etwa die Zweinaturenlehre Christi. Dies war nur möglich durch eine stark allegorisch-spiritualistische Exegese. Die Behandlung des **Neuen Testaments** in der Repristinationstheologie war die gleiche. Auf den Nachweis der Echtheit und Authentizität im Sinn der Ueberlieferung wurde das größte Gewicht gelegt. Biblisch-theologisch an-

gesehen sollte das Neue Testament wesentlich schon die ausgeführten Kirchenlehre zum Beispiel über die Dreieinigkeit enthalten. Die neutestamentliche Weissagung sollte die gesamte kirchengeschichtliche Entwicklung schon voraussagen.

Diese in den biblischen Disziplinen durchgeführte Stellung zur Bibel wurde auch die Grundlage ihrer dogmatischen Auffassung und des aus ihr zu entnehmenden Systems der christlichen Lehre. Als Hauptvertreter dieser **Repristinationsdogmatik** ist **Philippi** (1809—1832), der eine ausführliche „Kirchliche Glaubenslehre" veröffentlichte, die in weitesten Kreisen Verbreitung fand, zu nennen. Diese Glaubenslehre sucht die Gedanken der altlutherischen Dogmatik unter scharfem Abweis aller inzwischen aufgetretenen Einwände möglichst getreu zu reproduzieren. In der Bestimmung der systematischen Theologie nennt er zwar als Quelle „das erfahrungsmäßige Bewußtsein des gläubigen Subjektes." Im Grund aber ist etwas anders die maßgebende Quelle: „Die Quelle, aus der die Dogmatik zu schöpfen hat, ist die durch die Offenbarung erleuchtete Vernunft des dogmatisierenden Subjektes." Infolgedessen bietet er am Anfang seiner Glaubenslehre die Lehre von der irrtumslosen inspirierten **Schrift,** wenn er auch in Rücksicht auf den Textbestand nicht mehr von Wörtern, sondern nur von Wortinspiration reden will. „Mit Recht behaupteten die Alten nicht nur eine Real-, sondern auch die Verbalinspiration. Die Apostel und Propheten, ganz eingetaucht, lebend und webend im Element des göttlichen Geistes, konnten auch nur völlig durchgeistete Worte reden. Indem wir aber die Wortinspiration der Heiligen Schrift verteidigen, wollen wir damit nicht einer Wörterinspiration das Wort reden. Nicht die einzelnen Buchstaben, Silben und Wörter, auch losgelöst vom Inhalt und Zusammenhang, sind als unmittelbar eingegeben oder als von außen her diktiert zu betrachten, denn die Schrift enthält nicht Wörter Gottes, sondern das Wort Gottes und die göttliche Vorsehung hätte dann nicht zulassen dürfen, daß im Lauf der Zeit diese geheiligten Wörter in verschiedenen Lesarten auf die Nachwelt kamen." Nicht minder vertrat Philippi die Lehre von der **Person Christi** genau in der altkirchlich altprotestantischen Formulierung bis zur Anhypostasie der menschlichen Natur Christi. Mit besondrer Wucht trat er später in einem Streit mit dem Erlanger Hofmann für die altprotestantische Form der **Versöhnungs- und Rechtfertigungslehre** ein, weil er meinte, daß nur in ihr das spezifisch lutherische Grunderlebnis der **Rechtfertigung,** das ihn, den früheren Juden, zum Christen gemacht hatte, geborgen sei: „Denn gerade um der lutherischen Versöhnungs und Rechtfertigungslehre willen in ihrer bekenntnismäßigen Form und Fassung bin ich lutherischer Theologe, lutherischer Christ, ja Christ überhaupt. Denn wer mir das dem Zorn Gottes als Lösegeld gezahlte

Sühnblut des Sohnes Gottes, die der Strafgerechtigkeit Gottes geleistete stellvertretende Genugtuung unsers Herrn und Heilands Jesu Christi und damit die Rechtfertigung und Sündenvergebung allein durch den Glauben an das Verdienst dieses meines Bürgen und Mittlers, die Zurechnung der Gerechtigkeit Jesu Christi nimmt, der nimmt mir das Christentum überhaupt. Ich wäre dann ebenso gern bei der Religion meiner Väter des Samens Abrahams nach dem Fleisch geblieben." — **Philippi reproduziert hiermit nicht nur den religiösen und kirchlichen, sondern auch den theologischen wissenschaftlichen Typus des Altprotestantismus, nicht nur den alten Inhalt, sondern auch die alte Form.**

## II.

## Die Erlanger Theologie.

Auch die Erlanger Theologie wurzelt in der gleichen religiösen Erweckungsbewegung und der durch diese wiederbelebten urchristlich-reformatorischen Erlösungsreligion. Auch für sie sind demnach Sünde, Gnade, der Versöhner Jesus Christus Lebenswerte. Auch in ihr herrscht ein eschatologisches Sehnen und der kräftige Wille zur Reichsgottesarbeit. Auch sie will durchaus kirchlich sein. Aber in der Auffassung des **Wesens der Kirche** macht sich ein prinzipieller Dissensus zwischen ihr und der Repristinationstheologie geltend, über den besonders in den fünfziger und sechziger Jahren des 19. Jahrhunderts lebhaft gestritten worden ist. Den Erlanger Standpunkt vertrat zunächst der praktische Theologe **Höfling** in einer erstmalig 1850 erschienenen Schrift: „Grundsätze evangelisch-lutherischer Kirchenverfassung." Positiv stellt Höfling fest: Das Wesen des protestantischen Kirchenbegriffes verbietet die Aufnahme aller äußeren rechtlichen Formen in das Wesen der wahren Kirche. Diese ist vielmehr nur Sammlung der Gläubigen und sammelnde Anstalt für den Gläubigen, zu deren Organen die Gnadenmittel und das mit und in diesen gesetzte Amt der Gnadenmittel gehört.

Ein weiteres und noch bedeutsameres Charakteristikum der Erlanger Theologie liegt in ihrem **Verhältnis zur Wissenschaft und in ihren Beziehungen zum neueren Geistesleben.** Sie erstrebt bewußt ein neues wissenschaftliches Verständnis des Christentums entsprechend Hofmanns berühmter Forderung nach einer **„neuen Weise alte Wahrheit zu lehren."** Das Verhältnis zur älteren Lutherischen Theologie des 17. Jahrhunderts und damit auch zur Repristinationstheologie des 19. Jahrhunderts, zum modernen Fortschritt anderseits hat Thomasius in klassischer Form zum Ausdruck gebracht. „Vorwärts haben wir gewollt auf allen Gebieten der Theologie, nur keinen solchen Fortschritt, der die alten Grundvesten erst abbricht, keinen solchen, der lediglich in der Luft schwebt, sondern einen Fortschritt auf dem alten guten Grund, einen organischen Fortschritt."

**Der innertheologische Fortschritt der Erlanger Theologie ist in seiner wissenschaftlichen Formulierung bedingt durch den Zusammenhang mit dem allgemeinen Geistesleben. Sie hat Beziehungen gewonnen zur Psychologie, zur Geschichte und zur spekulativen Philosophie** und zwar vornehmlich derjenigen des späteren Schelling, aber auch Hegels.

Die subjektiv psychologische Grundlegung der Theologie hat ihre schärfste Formulierung in **Hofmanns** berühmtem Satz gefunden: **„Ich der Christ bin mir dem Theologen eigenster Gegenstand meiner Wissenschaft."** Der persönliche Christenstand bietet danach der Theologie den Stoff der Wissenschaft, diese ist scharf gesprochen Selbstbiographie. Hofmann sagt an einer Stelle deutlich, das Christentum habe zum ersten ein unabhängiges Dasein in dem unmittelbar gewissen Tatbestand der Wiedergeburt. Aus ihm entnimmt Hofmann selbständig das Lehrganze, das er im „Schriftbeweis" an den Anfang stellt. Die christliche Psychologie ist mithin eine entscheidende Grundlage für Hofmanns Theologie. **Frank** entnimmt das Thema seines größten und selbständigsten Werkes **„System der christlichen Gewißheit"** (1. Auflage 1870 ff., 2. Auflage 1881 ff.) dem Wesen der reformatorischen Religiosität, die nur kraft ihres subjektiven, wenn auch in Gott gebundenen, Gewissens den Bruch mit der objektiven Autorität der römischen Kirche unternahm. Aber er beruft sich für den subjektiven Ausgangspunkt auch auf die parallele Stellungsnahme der gesamten modernen Philosophie von Cartesius bis Kant und auf den Empirismus der modernen Naturwissenschaft, die aus den beobachteten Wirkungen auf das objektiv Wirksame zurückschließt. **Ausgangspunkt für die Erlanger Theologie ist das subjektive Christenleben sowohl bei Hofmann wie bei Frank.**

Frank geht von einer allgemein-psychologisch erkenntnistheoretischen Bestimmung des **Wesens der Gewißheit** aus und beschreibt ihr formales Zustandekommen. „Die Gewißheit ist das Innewerden der Uebereinstimmung des Seins mit dem Begriff oder der Erfahrung mit der Erkenntnis." Die Gewißheit ist eine Zuständlichkeit des Subjektes, die aber zugleich sich auf ein Objekt bezieht. Die Verbindung zwischen Subjekt und Objekt kommt durch Erfahrung zustande. Erfahrung besteht in der bewußten und dauernden Aufnahme und Verarbeitung von Eindrücken, die ein Subjekt von einem Objekt hat. Die christliche Gewißheit trägt formal den gleichen Charakter. Materiell unterscheidet sich die christliche Gewißheit von der natürlichen durch die sonderliche sittliche Erfahrung, welche ihr zu Grunde liegt. Sie besteht in der **Wiedergeburt** und **Bekehrung.** Frank versteht darunter „eine durch ethische, nicht von dem Subjekt selbst ausgehende, aber von ihm willig hingenommene Impulse vollzogene Umwandlung des sittlichen Lebenstandes. Ver-

möge ihrer unterscheidet sich ein neues Ich als innerster Bestimmungsgrund des persönlich-sittlichen Lebens von dem bisher herrschenden und behauptet im Kampf mit demselben seine zentrale dominierende Stellung." **Der letzte Grund der christlichen Gewißheit ist für Frank der Tatbestand der sittlichen Erneuerung.** Das Vorhandensein des guten Baumes gibt sowohl die Gewißheit, daß er gut ist, wie daß ihm gute Wurzeln zu Grunde liegen.

Denn aus dieser grundlegenden Gewißheit von der Wiedergeburt und Erfahrung gewinnt Frank die Gewißheit um alle für die christliche Erlösungsreligion wichtigen Wahrheiten. „Im Subjektiven ist zugleich die Gewißheit vom Objektiven enthalten." Infolgedessen ist der weitere Inhalt des Systems dem Nachweis gewidmet, welche **Glaubensobjekte** dem Christentum in und durch die Erfahrung der Wiederkunft vergewissert worden sind. Frank unterscheidet in Bezug auf die Gewißheit drei Arten von Glaubensobjekten, die er immanente, transzendente und transeunte nennt. Immanente Objekte sind die unmittelbar im Subjekt enthaltenen Erkenntnisse über die Wiedergeburt, aber auch über die Sünde und Freiheit. Von diesem steigt er zu den wirkenden transzendenten Faktoren auf: Gott, seine Persönlichkeit und die Dreieinigkeit, wie der Gottmensch und sein Sühnewerk. Die transeunten Glaubensobjekte sind diejenigen, durch welche jene transzendenten Faktoren hindurchgehen, um die Verbindung mit den immanenten Tatbeständen des christlichen Lebens herstellen. Hierher gehören die Kirche, die Gnadenmittel und auch die Schrift.

Vom Standpunkt der christlichen Gewißheit aus vollzieht Frank auch eine **apologetische Auseinandersetzung** mit den das Christentum bestreitenden Weltanschauungen. Er hält eine Apologetik im Sinn einer voraussetzungslosen allgemeinen gültigen Auseinandersetzung mit antichristlichen Weltanschauungen für erfolglos. Er will statt dessen nur zeigen, warum einen Christen, wenn er wirklich ein Christ ist, diese Gegensätze nicht zu beunruhigen brauchen, ja ihm im Gegenteil notwendig erscheinen. Erlebt man selbst kein Wunder, so muß man Rationalist sein, erfährt man nicht die kräftigende Wirkung des Wortes Gottes, so muß man dieses kritisch zersetzen, erfaßt man nicht persönlich den Gegensatz des heiligen Gottes wider die Sünde, so muß man Gott pantheistisch mit der Welt verbinden.

**Franks System ist eine wirklich grandiose selbständige Leistung, in der eine neue Weise, die alte Wahrheit zu begründen versucht wird.** Vom Standpunkt der alten Wahrheit kann man inhaltlich kein Bedenken erheben. Fragen kann man nur, ob wirklich der von Frank gewählte neue Weg der richtige und auf die Dauer gangbar ist.

Solche Bedenken hat **Ihmels** (geb. 1858) geltend gemacht

in seinem Buch „Die christliche Wahrheitsgewißheit, ihr letzter Grund und ihre Entstehung" (1. Auflage 1901, 3. Auflage 1914). Ihmels ist zunächst mit Frank darin einig, daß der letzte Grund, welcher den Christen der Wahrheit gewiß macht, ein subjektiver ist: „Sie kann nur auf dem Weg persönlicher Heilserfahrung zu Stande kommen." Die Frage ist aber nun die, ob ich aus dieser subjektiven Erfahrung auch die Erkenntnis des objektiven Christentums ableiten kann, oder ob mir dieses nicht zunächst anderswoher gegeben sein muß, damit ich daran dann meine subjektiven Erfahrungen anschließe. Dieser Meinung ist Ihmels. Es ist das göttliche Wort mit seinem zentralen Inhalt, das dem Christen geschichtlich bekannt wird und seine Wirkung an ihm ausübt. An diese objektiven Erkenntnisse schließt sich erst die persönliche Erfahrung an, welche den Christen der Schrift gewiß macht. **So führt hier der Weg vom Objektiven zum Subjektiven, von der Geschichte zur Psychologie.** Ein weiterer Unterschied zwischen Frank und Ihmels besteht in der näheren Bestimmung der grundlegenden religiösen Erfahrung. Während Frank sie wesentlich als sittliche bezeichnete und sie Wiedergeburt und Erfahrung nannte, nennt sie Ihmels die **Rechtfertigung**: „Immerhin wird es zuletzt eine doppelte Reihe von Eindrücken sein, an denen das Verständnis und die Gewißheit des Evangeliums haftet. Einmal hat das Evangelium das Recht der göttlichen Forderungen an uns und des göttlichen Gerichtes über unsre Sünde bestätigt. Wie aber dann aus der Heilserfahrung, welche unter allen Umständen schon in der Gerichtserfahrung sich verbarg, unter fortgehender Einwirkung dieses Evangeliums die sieghafte Glaubensgewißheit um dasselbe als das ihn rettende Gotteswort geworden ist, ist vollends das unübertragbare Geheimnis einer jeden Person, die es erlebt."

Die Eigentümlichkeit der Erlanger Theologie ist weiter charakterisiert durch ihre Stellung zur Geschichte; nennt man sie doch geradezu die **Heilsgeschichtliche Theologie.** Damit tritt sie in Gegensatz zu der altlutherischen und auch zur Repristinationstheologie, für welche die Offenbarung zu allen Zeiten einen sich wesentlich gleichbleibenden Inhalt supranaturaler Erkenntnisse hatte. Demgegenüber entwickelt die Erlanger Theologie eine heilsgeschichtliche Auffassung der Offenbarung und zwar gerade auch in Bezug auf das Verhältnis von Weissagung und Erfüllung.

In allen Wissenschaften trat in der ersten Hälfte des 19. Jahrhunderts das Historische neben, ja über das Nationale in den Vordergrund. Das zeigte sich in der Rechtsgeschichte, in der Staatengeschichte und in der Philologie. Selbst die Naturwissenschaft beugte sich dem historischen Prinzip, indem sie vor allen Dingen fragte, wie die Natur einst gewesen sei und wie der gegenwärtige Zustand allmählich geworden wäre. Das 19. Jahrhundert wird darum auch

das Jahrhundert der Geschichte. Von ihm wird auch die Erlanger Theologie beeinflußt. Aber auch die **Verbindung von Geschichte und Metaphysik,** ja die Bildung des Begriffes der Heilsgeschichte ist schon außerhalb der Theologie vollzogen von dem **Philosophen Schelling** in der letzten Periode seines Denkens, in der er einen ganz unmittelbaren Einfluß auf den Begründer der heilsgeschichtlichen Theologie, Hofmann, ausübte.

Bei Schelling finden sich die für die gesamte heilsgeschichtliche lutherische Theologie maßgebenden Sätze: „Der Inhalt der Offenbarung ist nichts anders als eine höhere Geschichte, die bis zum Anfang der Dinge zurück und bis zu deren Ende hinausgeht." Die Theologie hat es ganz und gar mit Geschichte zu tun, denn „das Christentum ist unmittelbar und zunächst eine Tatsache, die wie jede andre rein geschichtlich ausgemittelt werden muß." Christus selbst ist eine geschichtliche Erscheinung, aber doch eine solche, in der sich das Ewige offenbart: „Der eigentliche Inhalt des Christentums ist aber ganz allein die Person Christi. Christus ist nicht der Lehrer, Christus nicht der Stifter, er ist der Inhalt des Christentums." „Wer von einer übergeschichtlichen Geschichte nichts weiß, hat keinen Raum, wohin er eine Persönlichkeit wie Christum stellen könnte." In diesen Formeln: **höhere Geschichte, übergeschichtliche Geschichte ist der Begriff der Heilsgeschichte schon gegeben.**

Die Nachwirkungen Schellings machen sich besonders in **Hofmanns** erstem großem Werk: **„Weissagung und Erfüllung im Alten und im Neuen Testament"** (1841—1844) geltend. Die Weissagung vollzieht sich nicht in erster Linie in Worten, sondern in Tatsachen und deren Zusammenhang, die nachträglich durch das Wort gedeutet werden. Die israelitische Geschichte ist ein Zusammenhang von Tatsachen, die auf ein bestimmtes Ziel, Christus, hinstreben. „In dem heiligen und seeligen Menschen Jesus ist die Geschichte, welche zwischen Gott und Menschen geschieht, zu einem vorläufigen Abschluß gekommen." Christi Geschichte selbst ist aber wieder der Ausgangspunkt einer weiteren Geschichte, die eine Weissagung auf die Vollendung des Verhältnisses von Gott und Menschheit in sich schließt. „Sonach haben wir in der Selbstdarstellung Christi in der Welt zugleich Geschichte und Weissagung: Geschichte nämlich immer fortschreitende Gestaltung der Gemeinschaft von Gott und Mensch; Weissagung, nämlich immer bestimmtere Hinweisung auf die endliche Gestalt der Gemeinschaft von Gott und Mensch."

Diese Auffassung der Geschichte, die auf allen ihren Stufen einschließlich der neutestamentlichen Weissagung ist, als einer in sich zusammenhängenden christlichen Heilsgeschichte, hat **Hofmann** auch seinem zweiten großen Werk: **„Der Schriftbeweis. Ein theologischer Versuch"** (1. Auflage 1852 ff., 2. Auflage 1857 ff.) zugrunde gelegt. Das Christentum ist einmal ein Tatbestand, der sich

aus dem religiösen Leben des einzelnen Christen entnehmen läßt. Davon war schon früher die Rede. Sodann aber liegt das Christentum in der Heilsgeschichte vor, die von der Gegenwart nach rückwärts bis in die Ewigkeit hinaufführt und nach vorwärts in der Eschatologie endet. Infolgedessen schildert Hofmann in seinem „Schriftbeweis" jeden einzelnen Grundbestandteil der christlichen Wahrheit in seiner heilsgeschichtlichen Entwicklung von den Anfängen an über Christus bis zum Ende aller Dinge. Er stellt zum Beispiel alle die Tatsachen dar, durch die sich Gott im Alten Bund mit den Menschen verknüpft hat, bis in Christus die engste gottmenschliche Verbundenheit erreicht wird, die sich in der Gemeinde fortsetzt und durch den wiederkehrenden Christus vollendet wird.

Auf Grund und im Anschluß an diese heilsgeschichtliche Auffassung der Offenbarung entwickelt sich die Erlanger **Lehre von der heiligen Schrift,** die trotz gewisser Zusammenhänge mit der altlutherischen und der Repristinationstheologie prinzipiell Neues in sich schließt. Die eigentliche Offenbarung vollzieht sich in Geschichtstatsachen, die ihre Deutung im mündlichen, inspirierten, prophetischen Wort finden. Erst die Wiedergabe dieser Offenbarungstatsachen und Worte ist die Schrift. Hofmann nennt die Schrift „Denkmal und Urkunde der Heilsgeschichte." Sie ist der Abschluß sowohl der alt- wie der neutestamentlichen Offenbarungsgeschichte. Für Hofmann sind Schrift und Offenbarung nicht identisch, aber sie stehen einander auch nicht feindlich oder wenigstens beziehungslos gegenüber. **Die Schrift ist Abschluß und Wirkung der Heilsgeschichte.**

Aus diesem Schriftverständnis erwachsen für Hofmann zwei neue Probleme, die in dem Titel seiner beiden Werke zum Ausdruck kommen in „Schriftbeweis" und in „Die heilige Schrift Neuen Testaments zusammenhängend untersucht" (1862 ff.). In der ersten Schrift wendet sich Hofmann gegen den in der altdogmatischen und auch in der Repristinationstheologie noch üblichen **Schriftbeweis.** Dieser entnahm der Bibel eine ganze Anzahl einzelner Stellen ohne Rücksicht auf den heilsgeschichtlichen Zusammenhang. Hofmann verlangt dagegen, daß mit der ganzen Schrift und zwar im Hinblick auf den heilsgeschichtlichen Zusammenhang ihrer einzelnen Bestandteile bewiesen werde. „Nicht bloß aus der ganzen Schrift, sondern auch mit der ganzen Schrift, haben wir den Beweis zu leisten."

Dementsprechend hat Hofmann in seinem „Schriftbeweis" dies Programm ausgeführt und das gesamte biblische Material in heilsgeschichtlichem Zusammenhang zum Beweis der hauptsächlichsten Grundgedanken des christlichen Lehrsystems dargestellt, das er an den Anfang des Buches gestellt hatte. Das andre Problem, welches Hofmann in Angriff nahm, war das **Kanonsproblem.** Aus der heilsgeschichtlichen Auffassung ergab sich mit Notwendigkeit die Schöpfung einer Schrift. Aber die Identität dieser Schrift mit

der uns tatsächlich in der Bibel vorliegenden Sammlung von Büchern ist damit noch nicht erwiesen. Die alte Dogmatik hatte die Inspiration und Autorität, welche der Schrift überhaupt zukommt, einfach auf die konkret vorliegende Sammlung übertragen; die neuere kritische Theologie hatte eine ganze Reihe von Schriften aus dem Kreis der glaubwürdigen urchristlichen Ueberlieferung ausgeschaltet. Als Ersatz jener älteren Anschauung und im Gegensatz gegen die neuere Kanonskritik, begann nun Hofmann das Riesenwerk: **„Die heilige Schrift Neuen Testaments zusammenhängend untersucht."** Er stellt sich zwei Probleme: Einmal soll die geschichtliche Untersuchung der uns vorliegenden Schrift ergeben, ob und in welchem Umfang sie wirklich Urkunde der heilsgeschichtlichen Offenbarung ist, zweitens soll ein Ueberblick der Geschichte der Kirche in ihrem Verhältnis zu dieser neutestamentlichen Schrift gegeben werden. Die zweite Aufgabe, die man kurz als eine Geschichte des **Testimonium ecclesiae für die Schrift** bezeichnen kann, hat Hofmann selbst nicht mehr ausgeführt, sondern ein andrer, von ihm angeregter Theologe Martin Kähler hat diesen Gedanken aufgenommen und wenigstens in einer großen Skizze ausgeführt. Hofmann selbst nahm in seinem Werk die andre Aufgabe vor, **den inneren Zusammenhang aller im Neuen Testament vorhandenen Schriften und damit die Notwendigkeit ihrer Zusammenstellung zu erweisen.** Wie etwa in einem Dom jeder Stein an seiner bestimmten Stelle steht und darum seine Entfernung den ganzen Bau gefährden würde, so soll es auch in der Bibel sein. Zu diesem Zweck begann Hofmann einen **Kommentar zum ganzen Neuen Testament,** der in den Dienst jenes letzten Zweckes trat. Dadurch ist die Eigenart seiner Exegese bedingt, der es auf den Nachweis des Zusammenhanges von Vers zu Vers, von Kapitel zu Kapitel ankommt, so daß jede Schrift als in sich geschlossenes Ganzes erscheint, aus dem man nicht beliebig ein oder das andre Stück als unecht ausscheiden kann. Aber auch die einzelnen Schriften des Kanons sollen auf einander gestimmt sein und eine die andre voraussetzen und bedingen. In ungeheurer Arbeitsleistung hat Hofmann eine große Anzahl von Schriften des Neuen Testaments kommentiert, ist aber durch seinen Tod an der Vollendung seines Werkes verhindert worden. Aber selbst wenn ihm der Abschluß gelungen wäre, würde das Buch doch nicht den gewünschten Nachweis für den Kanon gebracht haben. Denn dieser stand doch zu stark unter dem Eindruck einer vorgefaßten dogmatischen Theorie. Ohne eine solche hat der Nachfolger Hofmanns auf dem neutestamentlichen Lehrstuhl in Erlangen **Theodor Zahn** (geb. 1838) die einzelnen neutestamentlichen Schriften rein exegetisch und historisch-kritisch in einem **großen Kommentarwerk,** in einer „Einleitung in das Neue Testament," und in einer Kanonsgeschichte behandelt. Hier wurde nachgewiesen, daß unsre

neutestamentlichen Schriften so früh und von solchen Männern verfaßt wurden, die eine gute geschichtliche Kenntnis von der Offenbarung haben konnten. Der Kanon im Ganzen ist so frühzeitig und so natürlich aus kultischen Bedürfnissen zustande gekommen, daß wir in ihm eine glaubwürdige und authentische Urkunde der Offenbarungsgeschichte haben.

Auf Grund der bisher skizzierten Stellung der Erlanger Theologie zur Bibel, zu Bekenntnis und Dogma und der religiösen Erfahrung entwirft die Erlanger Theologie **ein dogmatisches und ethisches Gesamtverständnis des Christentums,** bei dem auch die Spekulation der Philosophie besonders Schellings mitgewirkt hat. Am zurückhaltendsten zeigt sich Hofmann in der metaphysischen Ausdeutung der **Trinitätslehre** und der **Christologie.** Er erkennt zwar noch die Ewigkeit der Trinität an, lehnt aber ihre nähere Bestimmbarkeit ab. In der Christologie bekennt er sich kurz zur Kenosislehre. Am eingehendsten hat er sich über das **Versöhnungswerk Christi** geäußert und dadurch auch in der lutherischen Theologie Befremden erregt. Lehnte er doch die stellvertretende Genugtuung durch Christus und das Ertragen des göttlichen Zornes ab. Positiv deutete er das Werk Christi im Sinn der alten griechischen Theologie und auch Schellings als einen Kampf mit dem Teufel. Das gute göttliche Prinzip in Christus erduldet alle Qualen des Bösen, entmächtigt dieses aber dadurch, daß es in gottwohlgefälliger Reinheit, im sittlichen Berufsgehorsam sich im Leben und im Sterben bewährt.

Viel stärker sind die spekulativen Gedankengänge bei **Thomasius** ausgebildet in seiner Dogmatik: „Christi Person und Werk." Einmal hat er das göttlich-trinitarische Leben näher zu durchdringen gesucht, in dem er es als einen in sich vollendeten Prozeß auffaßte. Vor allem aber hat er in der Christologie die **Kenosislehre** ausgebildet. Er bezog die Entäußerung nicht wie die altlutherische Dogmatik auf die mit der Gottheit geeinigte Menschheit Jesu, sondern auf die Gottheit des präexistenten Christus. Christus legt bei seiner Menschwerdung die sogenannten transzendenten Eigenschaften der Gottheit ab, die Allmacht, Allwissenheit, Allgegenwart, während er die sogenannten immanenten der absoluten Macht, Wahrheit, Heiligkeit, Liebe bewahrt. Thomasius hielt diese weitgehende Selbstentäußerung, um nicht zu sagen Umwandlung der Gottheit für notwendig, damit sie sich mit dem Menschen Jesus zu einem wahrhaft geschichtlichen Leben verbinden könne. Diese kenotische Theorie ist dann in verschiedener Abwandlung auch von den übrigen Erlanger Theologen vertreten worden, besonders von Frank. Von andrer Seite ist sie um so schärfer bekämpft worden.

**Der ethische Typus der Erlanger Theologie** ist einmal durch die Absicht charakterisiert eine **rein religiös-christliche Begründung**

**der Sittlichkeit** darzubieten. Es fehlt darum hier jeder Einfluß Kants und damit die Umkehrung des Verhältnisses von Religion und Sittlichkeit; nicht minder der imperative Pflichtencharakter. Statt dessen gilt als Ausgangspunkt und Kraftquelle des christlich-sittlichen Handelns bei Harleß und Frank mehr die Wiedergeburt, bei Hofmann mehr die Rechtfertigung. Hinsichtlich der **Verhältnisbestimmung der christlichen Ethik zur Welt hält die Erlanger Theologie eine mittlere Linie ein.** Eine völlige Verwerfung der Welt und ein dementsprechendes Handeln lehnt sie auf Grund ihres entschieden lutherischen Schöpfungsglaubens ab. Anderseits ist sie von der absoluten Ueberwertigkeit der Gemeinschaft mit dem transzendenten Gott gegenüber allen innerweltlichen Güter und von dem Tatbestand der Sünde, welche die Schöpfung durchdrungen hat, überzeugt. Es ist darum für den Christen ein asketisches Handeln im doppelten Sinn zu fordern. Einmal hat er alle immanenten Güter zum Mittel und Stufen zur Erreichung des höchsten transzendenten Gutes herabzusetzen. Sodann hat er das sündige Element in der Welt und seine Einflüsse auf die christliche Persönlichkeit auszuschalten. Infolgedessen hat der **Erlanger ethische Typus auch einen stark negativen Zug.** Er unterscheidet sich dadurch bestimmt von der neuprotestantischen Kulturethik, wie wir ihr bei Schleiermacher, Rothe und dann bei Troeltsch begegnen. Auf der andern Seite dagegen erstrebt sie **die positive Aneignung und Durchdringung der Welt des Schöpfers mit dem Geist des Erlösungslebens.** Eigentliches und nächstes Subjekt des christlich-sittlichen Handelns ist für die Erlanger Theologie der einzelne Christ in seiner erneuerten Innerlichkeit. Aber da der einzelne Mensch durch die verschiedenen sozialen Gemeinschaften bedingt ist und sie seinerseits beeinflußt, muß die christliche Ethik ihre Wirksamkeit auch auf die Gemeinschaften erstrecken. Aus rein christlich-sittlichen Prinzipien erwächst von diesen **sozialen Gemeinschaften** nur die Kirche und zwar die Kirche auch nur in dem Maße, wie sie eine rein religiös-sittliche und geistig-geschichtliche Größe ist. Die natürlich-sittlichen Lebensformen samt ihren Gütern sind dagegen nicht aus christlich-sittlichen Prinzipien ableitbar. Sie stellen vielmehr ihnen gegenüber selbständige, durch ihre immanenten, natürlich-sittlichen Prinzipien geleitete Größen dar. Auch in der Frage nach dem Verhältnis der christlichen Ethik zur innerweltlichen Kultur und ihren Sozialbildungen läßt sich von der Erlanger Theologie sagen, daß sie die hier notwendige Problemstellung in aller Schärfe besessen hat, nicht minder aber, daß sie auch die geschichtlich wie prinzipiell möglichen Lösungen sämtlich kannte.

# Die „Religion Jesu."*

Von Prof. Dr. W. Baur.

(Schluß.)

**Das Reich Gotes in den Gleichnissen.** Wie in den synoptischen Evangelien überhaupt, so stoßen wir auch in den Gleichnissen auf die drei Merkmale der Verkündigung Jesu; sie betreffen die Person des Predigers, die Kraft Gottes und das Reich speziell.

**Von der Person des Predigers.** Man raubt dem Reich seine Eigenart (Ewigkeitswert, Herkunft aus der Ewigkeit, Reich des Himmels) und verkümmert, verdreht, verweltlicht die Botschaft, wenn man dabei von der Person Jesu und der in ihm gegenwärtigen Gotteskraft absieht. Ohne Jesum gibt es überhaupt kein Evangelium, und ohne die Erfahrung der rettenden Gotteskraft bleibt die Verkündigung ohne wirklichen Wert, ja sie führt ins Verderben, wenn man sich ihr gegenüber verstockt. So redet Jesus im Gleichnis vom Hausbau am Schluß der Bergpredigt von der kritischen Bedeutung seiner Worte; von der Art, wie wir uns ihm gegenüber stellen, hängt unser bleibendes Geschick ab; man vergleiche das Gleichnis von den bösen Weingärtnern. Wen meint der Prediger, wenn er im Gleichnis vom Gärtner und dem Feigenbaum jenen sprechen läßt: „Herr, laß ihn noch dieses Jahr"? Er ist es selbst in seiner Sünderliebe, seiner Geduld, seinem Glauben an die Erlösungsfähigkeit der sündigen Menschen. Das vom verlorenen Schaf, sowie das vom verlorenen Groschen gehören beide insofern hierher, als Schaf und Groschen ohne die suchende Mühewaltung des Eigentümers verloren bleiben. Jesus ist gekommen die Sünder zu suchen.

Er selbst, der Prediger, ist es, der den guten Samen ausstreut, und er sendet seine Engel zur Zeit der Ernte. Er ist der Bräutigam, der um die Mitternacht die Schlafenden überrascht; er ist der König, der am Ende als Richter waltet. All das führt uns natürlich über die „Religion" Jesu hinaus.

**Von der Kraft Gottes.** Die die Völkermasse durchdringende Gotteskraft wird im Gleichnis vom Sauerteig symbolisch dargestellt; unter dem Weib dürfen wir in letzter Instanz den Prediger selbst verstehen als den, der diese Kraft vermittelt. Es ist aber kein magischer oder chemischer Prozeß, sondern ein sittlich-religiöser; daher wird im Gleichnis vom verborgenen Schatz im Acker, wie in dem von der köstlichen Perle die entschlossene Hingabe der ganzen Person im Bild vor Augen geführt, ob wir nun dieser Kraft wie zufällig begegnen oder sie energisch suchen.

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*) Hätte im Märzheft erscheinen sollen, war aber übersehen worden. Bitte um Entschuldigung. Ed.

Die Hingabe des ganzen Vermögens spricht sich, anders ausgedrückt, in herzlicher Buße und einfältigem Glauben aus; dies will uns das Gleichnis vom verlorenen Sohn melden; ähnlich die vom verlorenen Schaf und Groschen. Die Kraft der suchenden Gottesliebe ist es eigentlich, was zum Finden führt und bei dem verlorenen Sohn in Buße und sehnendem Glauben sich ausprägt. Ohne Hoffnung auf Annahme keine Wiederkehr, und ohne Reue keine sittliche Grundlage für diese Hoffnung. Die wiederherstellende Gotteskraft und reumütiger Glaube sind unzertrennlich miteinander verbunden.

Daß Jesus damit zu tun hat, steht uns in dem Gleichnis von den zwei Schuldnern deutlich vor Augen; nur im Umgang mit Jesus hat die große Sünderin Vergebung erlangt. Nun aber gilt: Je tiefer die sündenvergebende Macht gegriffen hat und greifen mußte, desto energischer die Liebe des begnadeten Menschen.

Doch ist dies kein dem Naturzwang unterstehender Prozeß; vielmehr ist nach empfangener Reinigung ein Rückfall in das alte Wesen möglich, der dann die Sünde steigert; dies lehrt uns das Gleichnis vom unsaubern Geist.

Umgekehrt ist es auch möglich, daß man sich dem Willen Gottes und somit dem Reich gegenüber zunächst verschließt, um am Ende sich doch eines Besseren zu besinnen, wie das Gleichnis von den zwei ungleichen Söhnen zeigt.

**Von dem Reich speziell.** Das Reich Gottes ist etwas Wachstümliches und Zielstrebiges; es hat eine eigene Organisation, seine eigenen Gesetze. Wie der sich selbsttätig entwickelnde Samen hat es seine Autonomie; es zieht das ihm zum Wachstum Dienliche aus dem Boden, in den es gepflanzt ist und wird. Auf der andern Seite zeigen die Gleichnisse vom vierfachen Ackerfeld und dem Unkraut unter dem Weizen an, daß dem Reich Gottes feindliche Gewalten in der Welt entgegenstehen; sein Entwickelungsgang ist also nicht ungehemmt und ungestört. Dabei hat es eine ihm innewohnende Ausdehnungskraft und eine die ganze Welt umfassende Bedeutung; es ist dem Sauerteig ähnlich und dem Senfkorn.

Diese ganze Entwicklung dauert, man weiß nicht, wie lange; sie gibt aber dem Guten wie dem Bösen Zeit zum Reifen. Indem das Reich Gottes in Raum und Zeit sich ausbreitet, kommt es in nahe Berührung mit dem in der Welt sich mischenden Guten und Bösen. Man kann also sagen: Im Kreise des auf Erden sich auswirkenden Himmelreiches befindet sich sowohl Gutes als auch Schlechtes. Aber nun soll eben jedem Gelegenheit gegeben werden, sich von der Himmelskraft des Reiches Gottes überwinden, sich mit ihr erfüllen und von ihr durchdringen zu lassen. Im Himmelreich auf Erden wirkt sich die Gotteskraft aus, so daß es ge-

wissermaßen die göttlichen Eigenschaften darstellt, das heißt das Verhalten Gottes dem Guten wie dem Bösen gegenüber.

Gott ist gut; er vergibt die Sünden und übt Barmherzigkeit. Darum sollen wir auch unsern Schuldigern vergeben: Im Himmelreich auf Erden wird die Vergebung geübt; das sollen wir aus dem Gleichnis vom Schalksknecht lernen. Wer da nicht mitmacht, geht seiner eigenen Vergebung verlustig. So hat die göttliche Güte einen sehr ernsten Hintergrund, so nicht minder das Himmelreich auf Erden.

Gott ist barmherzig und allezeit hilfsbereit; nicht anders, wer sich auf die Seite des Reiches stellt; er fragt nicht: Wer ist mein Nächster, sondern: Wem bin ich der Nächste? (Gleichnis vom barmherzigen Samariter.)

Die göttliche Güte erwartet keinen Lohn; so tut man im irdischen Gottesreich alles ohne Lohnsucht. Wer Lohn sucht, bringt sich darum; er wird eine Beute des Neides und der Mißgunst (Gleichnis von den Arbeitern im Weinberg). Gott selbst gibt, auch wo ihm nicht wieder vergolten wird; darum laden die Reichskinder die zu Tisch, die es nicht wieder heimzahlen können.

Der unauffälligen Wirkungsweise des Vaters, der im Verborgenen wohnt, entspricht unsre Demut. Sie macht nichts aus sich selbst und setzt sich gerade so durch (Gleichnis vom Untenansitzen.)

Zur Güte Gottes gehört auch seine Treue; er ist im Kleinsten treu, das heißt er achtet auf alles und beachtet alles in seiner Tragweite, weil er den geheimen Zusammenhang der Dinge kennt. Daher wird im irdischen Himmelreich die Treue eben auch dem Kleinsten gegenüber erwartet, das heißt den irdischen Gütern gegenüber (Gleichnis von den Pfunden, sowie das von dem ungerechten Haushalter). Untreu ist auch der, der sich auf irdische Güter verläßt, statt sie in dem Dienst des Ewigen zu verwenden (Gleichnis vom reichen Kornbauer). In diesen Zusammenhang gehört auch das vom reichen Mann und armen Lazarus; jenem fehlte es am rechten Gebrauch des Lebens; er war untreu.

Gott ist ein heiliger Gott; in seinem irdischen Reich handelt es sich auch um ernste und dem natürlichen Menschen ans Leben greifende Dinge; darum muß man nicht leichtsinnig in das Reich hineintaumeln; der Anschluß an diese Lebensgemeinschaft erfordert ernste Ueberlegung (Gleichnis vom Turmbau und Kriegführen). Dem heiligen Gott gegenüber gibt es keine wirkliche Anbetung ohne das Gefühl der Sünde und das Verlangen nach Gnade (Gleichnis vom Pharisäer und Zöllner).

Der heilige Gott gibt denen seinen heiligen Geist, die ihn ernstlich darum bitten (die mitternächtige Bitte).

Diesem Gott gegenüber gibt es kein menschliches Verdienst (Gleichnis vom Knecht); Gott läßt sich nicht spotten; seine Güte darf man nicht zurückweisen; Entschuldigungen scheiden uns vom Gottesreich (vom großen Abendmahl).

Auf das Endresultat der irdischen Entwickelung des Reiches weist das Gleichnis vom Netz hin, ebenso der Schluß des Gleichnisses vom Unkraut unter dem Weizen, sowie das von den Schafen und Böcken; es ist die große Scheidung.

Eschatologischen Gehalt haben auch die folgenden Gleichnisse: Das von den Knechten: Der Hausvater (die Gemeinde) weiß die Zeit der Parusie nicht; darum muß man wachen, das heißt treu sein (siehe das Obige), um nicht zum eigenen Schaden überrascht zu werden.

Das Ueberraschende der Parusie wird besonders auch im Gleichnis von den zehn Jungfrauen zur Darstellung gebracht; man muß also bereit sein. Zur Bereitschaft gehört auch das Ausharren in Gebet und Glauben (Gleichnis vom ungerechten Richter); ferner: Ernst im Ringen um den Eingang in das Reich (Gleichnis vom Hauswirt) und Treue (Gleichnis von den Zentnern).

### 6. Jesus und die Zukunft.

Wenn Jesus in der Aussendungsrede sagt: „Geht aber und predigt und sprecht: Das Himmelreich ist nahe herbeigekommen," so ist dies ein Zeugnis für seine Ueberzeugung, daß mit ihm und der Predigt des Evangeliums das Himmelreich den Menschen nahegebracht sei. Wenn er dann fortfährt: „Machet die Kranken gesund" usw., so erhebt sich die Frage: Ist dann das Himmelreich nicht schon vor diesen Taten da? Allerdings, und Jesus sagt nicht: Führet das Himmelreich herbei, indem ihr diese Dinge tut. Das stimmt auch mit dem bekannten Spruch: „Trachtet am ersten nach dem Reich und der Gerechtigkeit Gottes, dann wird euch das Uebrige alles zufallen." Die Umdrehung dieses Verhältnisses ist in manchen Kreisen gerade heute sehr beliebt. Man meint, erst müsse man die äußeren Verhältnisse bessern, dann könne man überhaupt nur nach dem Himmelreich streben. So wie es jetzt stehe, zögen jene, die nicht nach Gottes Reich und Gerechtigkeit trachteten, den größeren Vorteil daraus. Das ist nicht im Sinne Jesu gedacht. Er verachtet natürlich das Jetzt und das Heute nicht, aber er lenkt den Sinn auf das Jenseits, um das Diesseits erträglich und fruchtbar zu gestalten. Der Leib und das leibliche Leben sind vergänglich; ihm handelt es sich um bleibende Dinge.

Darum kommen auch im Vaterunser diese zuerst, und wenn es am Schluß heißt: „Erlöse uns von dem Uebel," so dürfen wir dabei freilich auch an die einzelnen Uebel denken, womit wir eben jetzt besonders geplagt sind; aber der Hinweis auf die große kom-

mende Erlösung darf nicht übersehen werden. Weil Jesus uns wirklich gründlich helfen wollte, darum weist er uns über die Gegenwart hinweg auf die Zukunft, da alles zurechtgebracht werden soll, nicht durch Menschenwitz und Menschenkraft, sondern durch Gottes Hand.

Man behauptet, er habe diese Zukunft sehr nahe geglaubt; wenn man jedoch an seine Hinweisung auf die Tage des Menschensohnes denkt und beherzigt, daß er selbst offen erklärte, den Tag des Endes nicht zu wissen, dann wird man doch andrer Meinung sein müssen. Er war ein Prophet und schaute die Zukunft in der Perspektive. Daß Jesus von dem Kommen des Reiches Gottes in Herrlichkeit, von seinem eigenen Wiederkommen, von Scheidung und Gericht, von Auferstehung und endlicher Weltwiedergeburt oder Weltverklärung überzeugt war und demgemäß lehrte und ermahnte, das geht aus den biblischen Quellen deutlich hervor; es sei bei dieser Gelegenheit auf den in Nummer 4 (1926) dieser Zeitschrift erschienen Artikel über „Die Lehre Jesu von den letzten Dingen" verwiesen. Mit der „Religion Jesu" kommen wir da freilich nicht mehr aus.

Aber er hat doch, wenn er die Vollendung aller Dinge nicht nahe glaubte, so wenig über die künftige Organisation seiner Gemeinde gesagt? Das ist natürlich richtig; allein der Spruch vom prinzipiellen Trachten nach dem Reich Gottes schließt auch dieses ein, und prinzipiell hat Jesus dieses Problem für alle Zeiten gelöst, indem er sagte: „Ihr wisset, daß die weltlichen Fürsten herrschen, und die Oberherren haben Gewalt. So soll es unter euch nicht sein; sondern so jemand will unter euch gewaltig sein, der sei euer Diener."

Soviel ist sicher: Es war Jesu ein wichtiges Anliegen, daß das Evangelium gepredigt werde. Er hatte den Reichsgottesblick: Das Missionsfeld ist die Welt. Seine Jünger sind das Licht der Welt und das Salz der Erde. Er schaut bis ans Ende und weiß, daß das Evangelium in der ganzen Welt gepredigt werden wird; ganze Nationen werden unter seinem Schatten wohnen, nicht nur Abkömmlinge Abrahams.

Daher lautet sein Befehl: „Gehet hin in alle Welt." Aber die große Sache überwältigt ihn nicht; sein Blick wird durch die Aussicht auf den Erfolg nicht verwirrt noch getrübt. Er beginnt beim Naheliegenden und sendet seine Jünger zunächst nur zu den verlorenen Schafen vom Hause Israels, obwohl er weiß, daß eben diesem Volk das Reich genommen werden sollte. Er selbst wirkt gelegentlich auch unter den Heiden, wird aber trotz oder wegen seiner Einsicht in den Charakter und das Geschick des Judenvolkes nicht müde, gerade an seiner Seele ernstlich zu arbeiten. Dabei ist

er ein starker und eifriger Beter, der es nicht versäumt, seinen Mitarbeitern das Gebet recht kräftig ans Herz zu legen, das Gebet im allgemeinen: „Dein Reich komme," und im besondern: „Bittet den Herrn der Ernte, daß er Arbeiter in seine Ernte sende."

Er bezeichnet seine Jünger als Menschenfischer; beschränkt ihre Wirksamkeit jedoch nicht auf das Predigen des Wortes, wie er selbst seine Sämannsarbeit mit der des Arztes verbindet, des Helfers in Leibesnöten. Seine Wirksamkeit erstreckt sich auf Juden und Heiden und umfaßt Leib und Seele, Diesseits und Jenseits.

So hat Jesus weniger an die Organisation als an die Mission gedacht, sein Blick schweift in die Ferne und streift immer die Ewigkeit. Es kommt der Tag der Rechenschaft, der Erntetag, der Tag der Vergeltung. Den Lohngedanken hat Jesus nicht einfach zurückgewiesen; mit den Worten: „Wer euch aufnimmt, der nimmt mich auf; und wer mich aufnimmt, der nimmt den auf, der mich gesandt hat" ist eigentlich alles gesagt. Wir sollen satt werden; wir sollen getröstet werden; wir sollen Gott schauen. Jede gute Tat soll belohnt werden; aber die Lohnsucht ist verderblich; sie bringt uns um den Lohn. Nur die Liebe, die nicht das Eigene, darum eben auch nicht Lohn sucht, wird belohnt; die Selbstsucht richtet sich selbst zugrunde. Ohne diese Liebe, die Gott und dem Nächsten selbstlos dient, gibt es keine Lösung der sozialen Frage; kein System kann sie ersetzen: keine Methode kann ohne sie zum Ziele führen. Dieser Liebe Ziel ist die Ewigkeit, und ihre Methode ist das Martyrium.

# „Der alte und der neue Glaube.“*

Eine Erwiderung von Frau Emilie Schaefer.

Daß der obige Titel schon von verworrener Geistesrichtung zeugt, ist sonnenklar; denn der wahre Gottesglaube muß wie Gott selbst sein, gestern, heute und in Ewigkeit derselbe.

Vom logischen Standpunkt aus kann es sich darum bei obigem Artikel nicht um die Gegenüberstellung oder Vermittlung zwischen einem alten und neuen Glauben, sondern um Glauben und Unglauben, um Christentum und Antichristentum.

Weil aber nicht nur Schriftgelehrte die Synode ausmachen, sodern tausendmal mehr Laien, Männer, Frauen und Kinder, die auf die Lehre ihrer Schriftgelehrten angewiesen sind und für welche Glaube oder Unglaube ihrer Lehrer, für diese und die zukünftige Welt, von den unberechenbarsten Folgen ist, so ist es nur recht und billig, daß eines von ihnen endlich an Ort und Stelle den Mund auftut, für diese Stummen.

Schreiberin will sich nicht aufhalten bei den Präliminarien dieses Artikels, da es darum handelt, was in unsrer Bibel Gottes Wort sei oder nicht. Auch diese Frage ist ja so alt wie das Menschengeschlecht und eingeführt durch das, dem Gotteswort gegenübergestellte Wort der Schlange: „Sollte Gott gesagt haben?“ Sie will vielmehr übergehen zum zweiten Teil, in welchem die Allerweltsfrage behandelt wird:

Wie dünket euch um Christum, wes Sohn ist er?

Jesus stellt diese Frage selbst an die Schriftgelehrten, um ihren Messianischen Glauben zu prüfen. Um ihnen jedoch zu bedenken zu geben, daß ihre Antwort, er sei Davids Sohn, seine Herkunft nicht decke, so läßt er die zweite Frage folgen, wie denn dieser Sohn zugleich Davids Herr sein könne?

Sie sind ihm die Antwort schuldig geblieben, wie so viele sie uns heute schuldig bleiben. So auch in obigem Artikel. Die Antwort steht aber ganz unzweideutig 1. Joh. 4, 1—7 und ist unbestreitbar. Eine Vermittlung gibt es hier ebensowenig, als zwischen irgendeinem andern Vater und Sohn. Wer da glaubt, daß Jesus Christus, der Gottmensch, nicht Jesus der Mensch, wie die Stelle in besagtem Artikel fälschlich wiedergegeben ist, ins Fleisch gekommen ist, der ist von Gott. Wer das nicht bekennt, der ist der Widerchrist, der den Vater und den Sohn leugnet. Eine Vermittlung gibt es hier nicht, auch keinen alten oder neuen Glauben.

Hier gibt es nur ein großes, ein weltweites Entweder-Oder. Und es ändert diese Tatsache, worauf in der genannten Abhandlung besonders aufmerksam gemacht wird, nicht im Geringsten, daß die

*) Siehe Theol. Magazin No. 2, 1928.

ganze Welt, Gelehrte und Ungelehrte, Juden, Heiden und Mohammedaner und ganz besonders vermittelnde Christen, diesem Jesum große Ehre erweisen. Das ist weiter nichts, als Menschenvergötterung und deckt sich mit der Verheißung der Schlange: **Ihr** werdet sein wie Gott.

In sechzehn Zeilen wird die positive Seite dieser Leben und Tod bedeutenden Frage der negativen Seite gegenüber gestellt, die mehrere Seiten füllt, sodaß, wenn man es liest, man unwillkürlich zu dem Schwert des Geistes greift, welches das Wort Gottes ist, vorausgesetzt, daß man es zur Hand hat. Und doch soll diese Abhandlung ja nur eine harmlose Gegeneinanderstellung sein des neuen und alten Glaubens, eine Abhandlung, die uns überzeugend klartun soll, daß kein Mensch sagen kann, wer recht hat, denn „jeder Teil kämpft mit der Bibel in der Hand" (der Herr Einsender vergißt, daß der Teufel das von Anfang an getan hat) und schließlich kommt es nach 1. Kor. 13 wie „sie" die Stelle anwenden, nämlich die Anhänger dieses neuen Glaubens, garnicht auf den Glauben, sondern auf die Liebe an. Mit dieser Liebe, um die Konsequenz bis zum letzten Ende zu ziehen, was doch logisch erlaubt sein sollte, brauchen wir gar kein Schwert des Geistes auch kein Entweder-Oder, sondern können uns ruhig mit Isaschar auf den Zaun setzen und mit Pilatus achselzuckend ausrufen: „Was ist Wahrheit."

Und um die jungfräuliche Geburt Jesu zu beweisen, bleibt ja schließlich doch nichts übrig, als die Stelle im Matthäus, diesem neuen Glauben gemäß.

Wie neu dieser Glaube ist, geht aus den Lästerungen hervor, welche die Geschichte der Juden anführt, die die Maria zu einer gemeinen Dirne stempelten.

Und ist denn nicht unser Apostolikum dadurch entstanden, daß diese selber Einwendungen, wie sie der neue Glaube jetzt macht, damals schon gemacht wurden? Und das oben angeführte Wort 1. Joh. 4, und andre Stellen, die gegen den Antichrist mit seinem Anhang gerichtet sind, sind sie nicht ein Beweis, daß schon die Apostel diesen Unglauben bekämpften und ihn durchaus nicht in Liebe aufnahmen?

Und ist es wahr, daß wir keinen andern Beweis haben, als die Bibel, daß Jesus Gottes Sohn ist? Sokrates mußte den Giftbecher trinken, weil sein Leben und seine Lehre verworfen wurde, obwohl viele sagen, daß sie der Lehre Jesu gleichkam. Aber er ist tot und nichts ist übrig geblieben, das ein neues Leben erzeugt hätte in den Menschen, die nach ihm kamen. Als Jesus seinen Geist aufgab, da standen ein paar Frauen unter dem Kreuz und der Jünger, den er lieb hatte. Die andern, welche bestimmt von ihm, als dem Messias, erwartet hatten, daß er das Messianische Reich sofort aufrichten werde, sahen all ihre Hoffnungen vereitelt und waren geflohen,

aus Furcht vor den Juden und versteckten sich hinter verschlossenen Türen. Aber der Tod Jesu war nicht das Ende, er war der Anfang der Neuschöpfung, welche aus seinem Sterben hervorsproß. „In ihm war das Leben und das Leben war das Licht der Menschen."

Von keinem andern Erdenbürger oder Religionsstifter konnte das je gesagt werden nach seinem Tod. **Er ist der da lebt,** von Ewigkeit zu Ewigkeit und daß das wahr ist, das haben Millionen an sich selbst erfahren, und viele haben es mit ihrem Tod bezeugt. Ist das kein Beweis der Gottessohnschaft Jesu Christi?

Und dann soll man die in Liebe als gleichberechtigte Gläubige ansehen, die diesen Gottessohn und die Liebe des Vaters, der ihn gesandt hat, mit Füßen treten und dieses Blut des Neuen Testaments unrein achten! Wolken ohne Wasser, welchen behalten ist Finsternis und Dunkel in Ewigkeit, nach den Worten der Schrift. Machen „sie" denn unsern göttlichen Herrn und Meister nicht zum Lügner und seine Apostel zu Betrügern, versündigen sich am Geist Gottes, der durch diese Zeugen redete und begehen so die Sünde, welche niemals vergeben werden kann. Mit Wissen und Willen verstocken sie sich selbst.

Daß die Unwahrheit niemals logisch ist, das könnten diese Vertreter des neuen Glaubens an ihren eigenen Beweisführungen sehen, wenn sie es wollten.

Und nun, nachdem die Gottheit Christi in Frage gestellt ist, und so leidlich abgetan, stellt uns dieser neue Glaube der Erlösung gegenüber, „so durch Christum Jesum geschehen ist," wie sich die Schrift ausdrückt. Denn wenn Jesus nicht der Christ und nicht vom Geist aus Gott gezeugt ist, so kann er unmöglich die Welt durch sein Blut mit Gott versöhnt haben. Und das Zeugnis der Schrift, daß ohne Blutvergießen keine Vergebung möglich ist, wie verhält es sich damit, angesichts dieses neuen Glaubens? Man höre und staune! Der Ausweg ist gefunden. „Die Gerechtigkeit Gottes . . . muß . . . der Barmherzigkeit und Liebe Gottes, als den größeren Eigenschaften, weichen." So dekretieren „sie." Und wir vom alten Glauben? Sagen wir nicht ja und Amen dazu? — Ja, Gott sei Lob und Dank, so sagen auch wir, nur auf einem andern Weg. Während „sie" die Liebe und Barmherzigkeit Gottes beanspruchen, wie es in ihren Kram paßt, so wir einzig und allein nach Joh. 3, 16. Auf **die** Liebe Gottes, die der armen, verlorenen Welt seinen eingeborenen Sohn gab, der, nach dem Vorbild, das Gott dem Moses gegeben, durch die am Kreuz erhöhte Schlange, allen Barmherzigkeit und Liebe anbietet, die **an diese Versöhnung glauben,** anders nicht. Darauf fußen wir. Aber gerade das ist ja dem Antichrist ein Dorn im Auge. Er will sich selbst erlösen. „**Ihr** werdet sein wie Gott." Darauf steuert ja die ganze

Welt hinaus und, sagen „sie," der gerechte Gott kennt, was für ein Gemächte wir sind, er gedenket daran, daß wir Staub sind. Deshalb kommt er uns in Liebe entgegen. Darauf fußen „sie." Warum durch Jesu Blut gerecht gemacht werden? Dieses schreckliche Kreuz, dieser Schandpfahl, nie und nimmer kann das von Gott so gewollt sein. Die ganze Bibel, die ganze Blut- und Opferpraxis des Alten Bundes, ist ja alles Einbildung, Gott will ja garnichts davon, er hat es ja selbst gesagt. Und so nehmen „sie" denn wieder diese nach ihnen so verkehrte Bibel zuhilfe, um klar und deutlich zu beweisen, was? Daß der natürliche Mensch nichts versteht vom Geist Gottes, daß es ihm eine Torheit ist und kann es nicht erkennen, denn es muß geistlich gerichtet sein.

Das ist alles, was zu diesem Wortschwall von Begriffsverwirrung gesagt werden kann. Die schönsten, herrlichsten Gotteworte werden benützt, um das Gegenteil zu beweisen von dem, wozu sie gegeben wurden. Aber es wird dabei bleiben, was Paulus sagte: Das Wort vom Kreuz ist eine Torheit denen, die verloren werden; uns aber, die wir selig werden, ist es eine Gotteskraft.

Und nun folgt der dritte Abschnitt, Wiederkunft des Herrn und Gericht. Da schwindelt einem. Da werden die vom alten Glauben beschuldigt, daß sie die Hände in den Schoß legen und nichts leisten, zur Besserung der Verhältnisse in der menschlichen Gesellschaft. Sie warten auf die Zukunft des Herrn, der alles zurecht bringen wird und vorher lohne es sich nicht, einzugreifen. Wenn man das liest, und kennt die Weltverbesserer, die das den wahren Christen in die Schuhe schieben, da „bekommt man's mit dem Zorn," wie die Pommern sagen. Darum nur zum Schluß einige Fragen:

Der Ebraerbrief, der sowieso all die Fragen, welche in besagtem Artikel aufkommen, ausführlich für alle diejenigen zur Zufriedenheit beantwortet, welche daran glauben wollen, zählt im elften Kapitel „eine Wolke von Zeugen" auf, welche durch den Glauben die Welt bezwungen haben. Waren sie Leute vom alten oder neuen Glauben?

Und die Zwölfe, „ungelehrte Leute und Laien," die wenige Wochen nach der Kreuzigung ihres Meisters furchtlos ganz Jerusalem und Juda und Samaria mit ihrem Bußruf erfüllten, waren sie Anhänger des gepriesenen neuen Glaubens?

Und die Christen des ersten Jahrhunderts, die so zuversichtlich und täglich auf ihren Herrn und seine Wiederkunft warteten, haben sie darum ihre Hände in den Schoß gelegt oder sind sie es nicht gewesen, von denen ihre Feinde sagten, daß sie mit ihrer Lehre den ganzen Erdkreis bewegten?

Und wer arbeitet heute noch, ohne vor allen Dingen zu fragen, was wird mir dafür?

Deutschland allein hat 35,000 Diakonissen, sind sie Boten des neuen Glaubens?

Und all die Reichsgottesanstalten in der weiten Welt, wer hat sie gestiftet und erhalten?

Ein Zinzendorf, ein Wichern, ein Bodelschwingh, ein Georg Müller in Bristol, eine Elisabeth Frey, und wie sie alle heißen, diese Großen im Reich Gottes, wem haben sie gedient? Dem Menschen Jesu oder ihren göttlichen Meister, an den Elendesten unter den Menschen?

Können „sie" mit ihrem sozialen Evangelium, durch das man sich selbst erlösen zu können meint, das nachmachen?

Und unsre eigenen Missionare, predigen sie Christum und seine Erlösung oder „ihr werdet sein wie Gott?"

Der Tag wird es klar machen, sagt die Schrift, welcherlei eines jeglichen Werk gewesen ist. Warum sollte man es denen verargen, die sich weigern, Holz, Heu und Stoppeln als Baumaterial zu gebrauchen, weil es dem Feuer nicht Stand hält?

Und auf Sand baut, wer den Grund und Eckstein, Jesum Christum, verwirft. Ist da eine Zusammenarbeit möglich?

Es sind ja so unendlich viele, die diesem neuen Glauben huldigen, laßt sie zugreifen, das Warten auf die Wiederkunft des Herrn hindert sie ja nicht. — Aber das ist gerade, wo es happert.

Die Hauptfrage jedoch, die mir um der Laien willen die Feder in die Hand drückte, ist diese: Hat irgendein Lehrer in unsrer Evangelischen Synode ein Recht, anders zu lehren, als unser Bekenntnisparagraph anweist? Sind unsre Pastoren nur dem Schein nach auf das Apostolikum verpflichtet oder in der Wahrheit?

Es gibt eine Denomination, wo die Anhänger dieses „neuen Glaubens" mit offenen Armen empfangen würden, es sind die Unitarier. Sollen wir das werden oder gehören solche Lehrer nicht **dahin**?

Es ist ja Privatsache, was ein jedes für sich glauben will. Es ist jedoch nicht Privatsache, was unsre Synode uns und unsre Kinder zu lehren gestattet.

# EDITORIALS

## CLERICAL TYPES

They say ministers are the worst listeners. If their own members, during a service, behaved as they do themselves they would feel outraged—so it is claimed. They don't sit still, they talk with their neighbors, they draw their watches, they do everything they ought not to do. These charges, though grave, may be true; but the writer claims they cease to be true as soon as a real man with a genuine message rises in the pulpit. When that happens there is not a man in the audience whose attention is half so absorbing and intelligent as the minister's. That was at least our experience when we attended this year's Pastors' Convention at Columbus, O. We referred briefly to this Convention in our German Editorial, in the March number, when speaking of Dr. Speer. But we feel we should be guilty of a sin of omission if we did not try with our humble pen, to draw a few more pictures of some of the outstanding men there, and of the way they presented their message.

If we were asked which one of all the speakers we heard impressed us most, we probably should say it was *Dr. Merton S. Rice,* of Detroit; and we don't care a bit if others disagree with us. We knew the man for we had heard him one summer at Lakeside, O. His theme was then: "The Poor Boy Who Became Great." It was the life story of Bishop Quayle, who had been a friend of the speaker. On that subject he entertained a large crowd for two hours! It was a hot night but we did not mind the heat a bit; we sat there as people entranced. Now if we have a man in our Synod who could perform a similar feat with equal success, we shall call that man blessed.

It was the same in Columbus. We heard only his address on the "Irresistible Christ". But he had no sooner stepped forth, that man of large body and not at all distinguished appearance; he had no sooner started with a few humorous remarks, when the old spell was there again. His text was quite unusual. It was: "But we see Jesus," with the accent on the *but.* He said there is crime in the world, perfect waves of crime: But there is Jesus; so we don't despair. There is sin, trouble, death in the world: But there is Jesus. Over against all these awful, disheartening things he matched Jesus and his inexhaustible resources. And you should have heard his stories. He has many of them, stories of his own experience. How he tells them! He photographs them on your

mind, he doesn't forget the slightest detail if it is relevant; and how he plays on your emotions. The time flies and you don't notice, and you only wish that he would go on talking. He is very informal, sometimes his hands are in both his trousers' pockets. He is a law unto himself. He is not an intellectual giant, he does not deal with philosophical problems. But he is large-souled, well-read, and draws from a seemingly ever-flowing fund of life experience. If we were to state exactly what makes him so attractive, we should possibly say it is his amazing naturalness, and the spontaneousness with which thought, humor, story, appeal bursts forth from him.

Soon after Dr. Rice there appeared on the platform a young man of about 36, of frail stature, with a great mass of hair on his head (already greying though), and with a cheerful smile on his face. It was *Dr. Bernhard C. Clausen,* of Syracuse, N. Y., the "laughing kid" among all those worthies. The man was the sensation of the Conference. The people went wild over him. Just imagine his extreme youthfulness! And he capitalized it somewhat. The weather was bad at times but he went around bareheaded, college-boy fashion. This youngster had an ease of manner on the platform that most of us don't achieve in a lifetime. His diction was perfect, his command of language very unusual. But he laughed too much. Long before he would burst out laughing one could see it coming, in his face. The forerunner was already there while there was nothing to laugh about as yet. He over-worked the laughing part, so that at times he was the only one laughing in the audience.

One of his subjects was: "How to be angry." He said the seminaries had been adding to their curiculum all kinds of subjects in the last 10 or 20 years. One, however, they had not thought of yet. And he was going to supply the lack and give his hearers a course in the "lost art of being angry." Then he explained that being angry, like accumulated steam, might bring about a destructive explosion or, self-contained and directed in the right way, might render a useful service. The speaker in working out his illustration showed very considerable homiletic skill. But when he was through with his discourse he turned around to the presiding officer notifying him that his class had now finished their course, and asking him, in recognition of their proficiency, to confer on the members the degree of M.A., Masters of Anger.(!) We didn't like this oratorical stunt, it made the whole performance look like acting. The chairman, staid old Dr. Van der Pye, did not like it either, we could see; nor did Dr. Merrill, the pastor of the Brick Presbyterian Church, of New York, who followed him as speaker.

The reason Clausen had been asked to speak was because he had been making experiments in his church with getting reactions from his audiences, to his preaching, and these experiments had given him a good deal of publicity. He had preached a second time a number of his sermons that had been selected by a poll of his congregation. The reasons why these sermons were chosen a second time, he stated, were as follows: 1) they were "different" (he himself, at one time, had sung 3 negro spirituals in the service); 2) They were brief, 10-15 minutes; 3) they were newsy; 4) they were simple; 5) they had been somewhat dramatized.

We see the man affects the sensational. Inspite of his undoubted gifts he repelled us (the Ed.). He came to our Cleveland Lenten services the 3rd time this year; we didn't even go to hear him once; so much the worse for us, perhaps, but we could not stomach him. The subject of his Lenten addresses were: "The Lost Art of Laughter;" "The Gospel from a Sky-Plane;" "Jesus, the Gentleman;" "Light-House-Keeping:" "How to Remember."

The man who followed Clausen as we said before, and with whom we shall close this review, was *Dr. Merrill,* of New York City. He was as different from Clausen as he possibly could be. Even in appearance. If Clausen, being the young filly he was, had been cutting all kinds of capers on the platform, Merrill reminded one of an old war-horse. Not that he had a militaristic program. On the contrary he is the president of the Church Peace Union and of the World Alliance for International Friendship through the churches. But he was an older man (past sixty), mature, giving one the impression of quiet strength and manly confidence in himself and his message. His subject was, "An American Peace Program." Some of the points included were: "Bring about the outlawry of war; clear up the Monroe doctrine; say what relation the U. S. is to have to the League of Nations; foster good relations with England; no intervention in the interest of American investors in other countries; America must lead in progressive disarmament (the rich man ought to set the example of simplicity)." We see it was a political sermon although the speaker did not forget the religious emphasis ("Keep on having faith in God, in Christ, in peace"). As a good Presbyterian he believes in the church as a factor in moulding public opinion. He seemed to have in him the stuff out of which Christian "statesmen" are made, a quality that one would never even think of when listening to, say, Rice. Rice is a preacher only, perhaps of the individual gospel chiefly, but a prince as a preacher. Merrill is the *preacher* in *politics*, a student of great modern movements and actively affiliated with the forces that seek a Christian control of such movements.

There were many other clerical types represented in the speakers of that Convention, for those who could stay to the end. About 50 of our own church attended the Convention. They all testified gratefully to the good impressions received, and expressed the confident hope that next year one of our own successful men should find a place in the program.

## Die „Kinder der Propheten."

Das Problem der religiösen Beeinflussung unsrer Jugend macht uns mit Recht viele Kopfschmerzen. Die Frage: Ist unsre heutige Jugend schlimmer als die Jugend vergangener Tage? wird tausendmal gestellt und so oder so beantwortet. Die Pessimisten sagen uns: Die Kinder sind nicht wie die Väter waren. Die Väter lebten in einer einfacheren Welt. Sie waren mit wenigem zufrieden, sie fanden ihr Glück mehr in inwendigen Dingen. Es war leichter, sie für Religion und Kirche zu gewinnen. Die heutige Jugend lebt in einem materialistischen Zeitalter. Das Land ist reich geworden, Luxus und Vergnügungssucht haben überhand genommen. Alle Stände, jedes Alter ist von diesem Geist angesteckt, aber besonders die Jugend fällt ihm zum Opfer. Religiöser Ernst und sittliches Streben sind bei ihr so rar wie Ringeltauben. Die Optimisten dagegen lächeln über diese bedenkliche Diagnose. Sie weisen uns darauf hin, daß vor dreißig Jahren unsre Großväter gerade so dachten von denen, die damals jung waren, wie die jetzigen Väter und Mütter von ihren Kindern; daß also die ganze Sorge hinauslaufe auf die Unfähigkeit der Alten, sich auf den Standpunkt der Jungen zu stellen. Es sei ohne Zweifel wahr, daß jede Zeit ihre besonderen Gefahren habe. Es sei wahr, daß der junge Mensch dieser Nachkriegszeit sich anders geberde als die Generation vor ihm. Er verlange mehr Freiheit und Ungebundenheit. Aber wenn man seine gerechten Wünsche erfülle, so sei auch mehr Verlaß auf ihn. Ein mehr ausgebildetes Verantwortlichkeitsgefühl gebe ihm Initiative und Selbständigkeit.

Wir wollen uns in dieser Frage weder für die eine, noch für die andre Seite entscheiden. Wir halten dafür, daß auf jeder Seite etwas von Wahrheit zu finden ist, daß demnach der lateinische Satz auch hier seine Geltung hat: „In medio tutissimus ibis."

Worauf es uns ankommt, das ist die Anwendung dieser Betrachtung auf unsre pastorale Jugend, auf die „Kinder der Propheten" von heutzutage. Die Kinder (englisch: „sons") der Propheten im Buch der Könige waren ohne Zweifel die jungen Männer, die sich in den Prophetenschulen auf ihren zukünftigen Beruf vorbereiteten, demnach gleich unsern heutigen Seminaristen. Wir wollen den Ausdruck aber auf unsre jungen **Pastoren** anwenden.

Sind die jungen Pastoren, die jetzt einen so großen Einfluß auf synodale und gemeindliche Dinge ausüben, die Erben des Geistes ihrer Väter?

Einen so großen Einfluß, sagen wir. Denn vor dreißig Jahren, als wir selbst zu den jungen Pastoren gehörten, hatten dieselben gar keinen Einfluß. Nur selten meldete sich einer zum Wort bei den Konferenzen, und wenn er es tat, wurde das im ganzen für ein Zeichen von unerhörter Dreistigkeit gehalten. „Bescheidenheit ist eine Zier," so glaubte man damals. Jetzt ist es in manchen Distrikten gerade umgekehrt. Die englische Sprache wurde eingeführt, die alten Leiter sahen sich ins Hintertreffen gedrängt, und die Jugend ergriff die Zügel.

Der Wechsel in den Verhältnissen beschränkte sich aber nicht auf die Konferenzen. Nein, die Gemeinden wendeten fast ohne Ausnahme den **Söhnen** der Propheten ihre Gunst zu. Bei Pastorenwahlen hatte — und hat — Erfahrung, Dienstzeit, innere Reife nichts, gar nichts zu sagen. Der Mann von 25 hat immer vor dem von 45 den Vorzug, aus dem einfachen Grund, weil er 25 und nicht 45 ist.

Diese Tatsache wird ja auch auf andern Gebieten bemerkt. Jugend und damit Tatkraft und Rührigkeit ist auch im Geschäftsleben eine Empfehlung. Der ältere Pastor, oder sagen wir der Pastor der alten Schule, was man auch immer zu seinen Gunsten mit Recht anführe, hat nicht die **Aggressivität** der jungen Pastoren. Er besucht wohl seine Gemeinde und seine Kranke, so fleißig wie, oder fleißiger als der junge. Aber er ist nicht so unternehmend, er bringt nicht so viele neue Mitglieder in die Gemeinde. Er ist auch in Gefahr, mit alten Gebäuden, einer alten Kirche, einem alten Pfarrhaus zufrieden zu sein, während der junge bald mit seinen Bauplänen kommt und seine Gemeinde willig macht, für ein modernes Kircheneigentum viel Geld auszugeben. Dabei steht dem jungen Pastor eine größere Anpassungsfähigkeit zu Gebot. Worauf es ihm ankommt, ist der Erfolg, und den sucht er früh und spät, auf alle und jede Weise.

Ein anders Wort für dies Anpassungsverfahren ist das Streben nach **Popularität**. Man muß sich bei den Leuten beliebt machen: ein durchaus gerechtfertigtes Bemühen, wenn in rechten Grenzen gehalten. Das ist dem einen leichter als dem andern, je nachdem ihn die Natur ausgestattet hat. Aber wenn einer mal in dem Strom des allgemeinen Wohlwollens dahinschwimmt, so kann er sich bald nicht mehr seiner selbst wehren, der Strom übersteigt weit seine Kräfte. Er hat von einer Speise gegessen, die seinen Gaumen kitzelt, von einem Trank getrunken, der ihn berauscht. Das nächste, was er nun tut, ist, daß er sich einer geheimen Gesellschaft, oder mehreren, anschließt. Das ist zwar noch gegen ein Synodalstatut,

aber dies letztere ist doch eigentlich schon lange ein toter Buchstabe. Und es macht populär — das ist das große Lebensgesetz.

Der junge Pastor leistet etwas. Er mehrt die Gemeinde, füllt die Kirche, pflegt die Vereine, führt die Sonntagschulen zu neuen Höhen. Und die Gemeinden sind erkenntlich. Sie geben ihm den dreifachen Gehalt von dem, was vielleicht sein Vorgänger, ein Mann der alten Schule, hatte. In dieser Beziehung muß der alte die Segel streichen. Er hatte nicht den Wagemut, das siegreiche Selbstvertrauen, das solch frisches Leben hervorrufen konnte. Er konnte sich auch nicht der Mitarbeit der Glieder versichern, auf die der moderne Geistliche rechnen kann.

Ob nun die Söhne der Propheten ihren Vätern an geistiger Kraft und geistlicher Aufrichtigkeit gleichstehen, ob sie Männer des Gebets und Glaubens sind wie viele der Väter waren, ob sie ebenso feste Grundsätze und tiefe Ueberzeugungen haben wie jene — das ist eine ernste und wichtige Frage, doch wer will sie beantworten? Alles was wir sagen können, ist, daß sie in Gefahr sind, in diesen Punkten eine geringere Nummer zu bekommen, denn der äußere Erfolg ist doch nicht alles, und wer nach ihm zu sehr strebt, wird blind gegen die Menschlichkeiten, die da mit unterlaufen.

Wenn wir die Alten und die Jungen vergleichen, so sehen wir, daß sie wesentlich anders eingestellt waren; daß die einen wie die andern etwas haben und etwas nicht haben. Es bedürfen also die einen der andern, damit sie sich gegenseitig ergänzen. Daher muß unser Wunsch sein, daß sie sich beide verstehen lernen, so daß sie sich einander helfen können, und die Kirche „der Gaben die Fülle" habe (um mit einem methodistischen Schlagwort zu schließen).

The Christian World

## Not for Me, Thank You!

Extension Magazine, Chicago, November, 1927

Alice Tormer

There have been four different occasions when I seriously considered matrimony. I didn't realize at the time what kept me from it. I know now, and because a large and increasing number of women have held to single blessedness for much the same reason, I think that I have a duty to break through my natural reserve and set it down.

To do this adequately, I must background myself. I am the third daughter in a family of four girls and three boys. My people on both sides are Roman Catholics.

I didn't think much about marriage until I was through the convent, where I was one of a class of fifteen.

There was no particular economic necessity for any of us marrying in haste. I vaguely supposed that in time I would marry. My oldest sister did the year after she finished school. My next older sister was engaged, and it seemed to me a matter of time when I should follow their example.

My sister just older than I was about to marry when my oldest sister came home to live. Because of conditions which she declared were intolerable she had left her husband. My father and mother disapproved of her action, even while they were willing to help her rebuild her life.

It was my first experience of seeing the inside of any marriage but my father's and mother's which, of course, I took for granted as an institution which had no problems. I cannot tell, even now, what a shock my sister's revelations of her unhappiness aroused in me. Genevieve, just ready to marry, refused to regard it in any way related to her own life.

"All men aren't like Bob," she said. But four years later she divorced her husband and went to work in the city where they had lived.

There were two instances of failure in my own family. Is it any wonder that they deterred me from rushing into marriage? And yet my younger sister married the year she came out of the convent, and has remained most happily married through all these years. She never listens to anyone's story of unhappy marriage, but it seems to me that they have been forced upon me through my grown-up lifetime. Here are some of them:

Grace W. had to come home to her mother because her husband literally starved her and her little girl into giving him a divorce so that he could marry another woman.

Ellen M. had married a man whose terrible drinking of post-Volstead liquor drove him into madness which endangered her life.

Laura L. married a man whom she had known nearly all her lifetime. Somehow they didn't get along financially, and she didn't have the strength to stand constant reverses. Her immediate crowd was wealthy, and she grew frightfully discontented. Finally her husband went away. She sued for divorce, won it, and a few years later married a rich man.

Eva J. eloped with a young Jew. They were married by a justice of the peace and disowned by their parents. For some years they seemed to get along. Then she divorced him. He remarried immediately. A few years afterward she married a wealthy man.

You will say that these are isolated instances. They are, possibly. They are four, however, of the nine cases of divorce which have occurred in my immediate group, the fifteen of us who graduated from the same convent. There has been a general idea, within and without the Catholic Church, that Catholic women are not rushing into the divorce courts. But the fact remains that my two sisters have been divorced, and that nine of the fourteen girls who went to school with me—and a Catholic school—have been divorced.

If I did not know that this same condition is holding among other Catholic groups I might be inclined to think that there was something wrong with our group training. But I see the same thing everywhere. I went the other day to a luncheon where all the women were Catholics. Of ten women, four were divorced, all of them for good and adequate legal reason.

We Catholics were the last to go down before the modern idea of individual right to happiness. We had been so long trained in the Catholic ideal that marriage was not a romantic condition of bliss, but a vocation for the working out of life that we expected less from it and gave more to it than did other women. My mother had, I know now, that point of view. She took everything as it came, and made the best of it, regarding marriage as irrevocable. My sisters refused to see it that way. They reflected the attitude of our age rather than of our Church. I do not doubt, from the stories I have listened to, that the other nine women of my immediate acquaintance did the same.

Now I know that I'm no better, no stronger, no more fitted for misery than any one of my family and friends. I am, perhaps, not a particularly good Catholic, although I try to be; but I am a good enough Catholic not to bring my Church into scandal. If I married, and divorced my husband, and wanted to marry again, I wouldn't go hunting loopholes through the Church, even in the canonical law concerning annulments. I'd take my medicine. But I couldn't escape the fact that I had been a Catholic. Now I'm no saint, and so it's far easier to stay a spinster than risk the martyr's crown.

I have a good time in these early autumn years, and when I look around even at my happily married minority of friends I can't see that their possession of each other and children is any insurance against a lonely old age. Husbands die, and children go away. I know the mother of ten children who sees one of them twice a year, and never sees the others at all. Call me what you will, you cannot call me more

than I have called myself, a coward who has feared the arena of life; but my justification is that even the women of my own faith did not seem to find in it the strength to go through with their job.

Why didn't they?

Weren't they good enough Catholics?

Was it something lacking in themselves?

Or was it that the age was too much for them?

These aren't academic questions. I really want to know the answer. If I get an answer that will prove to me that my immediate environment is not the rule of present-day marriage, even among Catholics, who can tell what I might do?

## London's First Fellowship of Faiths

Zion's Herald, Boston

Charles Frederick Weller

Twenty-five hundred people in the first floor and two galleries of London's great religious center, the City Temple! Five hundred people in an overflow meeting downstairs—where the upstairs program was repeated. Standing-room filled. Unknown numbers of eager men and women turned away entirely! Over two thousand reserved-seat tickets asked for in advance. Such is the record of London's first Fellowship of Faiths, Thursday, July 21, 1927—a red-letter day which will be remembered as beginning in Europe a spiritual movement that promises to inspire and to unite East and West, America, England, Europe, and the Orient, across the old barriers of race and creed.

"Yes, for toleration is not enough," said Dr. Annie Besant, the last speaker at the London meeting (because Theosophy begins with "T"). "Let us agree upon the new principle of appreciation with which this Fellowship of Faiths is bridging the old deep gulfs of creedal prejudice. Toleration is patronizing and scornful; it says, 'You may think what you like—but I know you are wrong.' Instead, we are to appreciate the value of every religion and to seek to add its beauty to our own. It would be a poor world if the sun sent down only one ray or color. Out of the white light which shines upon us from the sun—uniting all the colors of the spectrum—each growing earth life takes the colors or rays which it needs. So with the Truth which comes as the great white light from God; each of us takes what he needs at his stage of growth. Each faith has its own color. Appreciation unites in one greater glow the fragments of truth which each religion represents."

The Moslem call to prayer, chanted by the muezzin of the London Mosque, picturesque in his turban, with fervid earnestness which stirred the great throng reverently despite his Arabic language, opened the meeting at exactly 5:15 p. m. At 7:05 p. m., on scheduled time, Rev. Dr. F. W. Norwood, who presided as pastor of the City Temple, closed the meeting with his Christian, yet universal benediction. In alphabetical order, the seven faiths were presented, beginning with Buddhism, of which Hon. Dr. W. A. de Silva of Ceylon was spokesman.

"Buddha's message has elevated souls into peaceful living, all over the world, for many centuries. Why? Because he taught men how to overcome the selfish desires which subject us to the ceaseless discords of life."

America's own international Young Men's Christian Association leader, Dr. Sherwood Eddy, spoke for Christianity. "I rejoice in this notable Fellowship of Faiths," he said, "as a symbol of the new world. When Buddha and Jesus have so long taught brotherhood, why have we achieved so little? Cannot all faiths agree that war is wrong? Without hatred based on lies, the World War could not have driven 26,000,000 people to their tragic deaths—40,000,000 if we include those dead of revolutions, famines, pestilence which the last war developed. In the early church, he who became a Christian, stopped being a soldier. It rests with us to cease boasting of our rival theologies and stand together for what all religions teach, peace and brotherhood. This impressive assembly today shows that the world's great faiths can stand together. By so doing, they can save the world from war."

Dr. Wei-Chang Che'n, head of the Chinese Embassy in London, unavoidably out of town, sent his written message. Confucius, born 551 B. C., taught that "within the four seas (meaning throughout the world) all men are brothers." "Confucius emphasized the goodness of all men everywhere, instead of the war-promoting doctrine that some people, in lands outside our own, are essentially alien, inferior—natural objects of suspicion, hatred, and attack. Confucianism emphasizes the social duties to be performed by every individual. It has never recognized the soldier as of high social rank. Materialism, too, it subordinates to ethics. Politics and politicians are singularly subjected, in China, to Confucius' ethical ideals. And one in every five of our whole globe's inhabitants are followers of Confucianism—a mighty world influence for brotherhood and peace."

Maharajadhiraja (meaning, King of Kings) Bahadur of Burdwan, famous potentate of a rich native state in India, spoke for Hinduism. He quoted with approval the English writer who says: "The test of a dogma is its universality. As long as the Church of England preaches a single doctrine that the Brahman, the Buddhist, the Mussulman, the Parsee, or any of the other sectarians who are British subjects cannot accept, it has no legitimate place in the counsels of the British commonwealth." He spoke of two Hindu terms, "Basthee" (individuality) and "samasthi" (collectiveness). "We must get to the Samasthi through the Basthee—through the faith of the individual to the Fellowship of Faiths; through the League of Neighbors to the League of Nations."

Judaism was represented by Rabbi Moses Gaster, who said he spoke "for the smallest nation and the oldest faith. Why has the Hebrew faith prevailed unbroken through the ages? Because it represents the ideals of brotherhood and peace for which this Fellowship of Faiths is striving—mightily with glorious promise, international, interracial, interreligious, loyal to the spirit of the one universal God and to the universal brotherhood of all mankind."

Mohammedanism or Islam, the Moslem faith, was presented by two speakers, Abdul Majid and Maulvi A. R. Dard. "If a Moslem refuses to believe in Jesus, he ceases to be a Moslem. For the follower of Islam believes in all the religious prophets; his faith includes the teachings of all religions. Islam means peace. The Moslem ten commandments include mercy as Jesus taught it on the Mount of Olives, self-effacement, unity. No other religion is so tolerant. No other has so nearly approached the ideal of a League of Nations. Moslems believe fervently in the principles of the Fellowship of Faiths—criticizing no man's religion, emphasizing those spiritual and ethical fundamentals in which all great faiths agree."

The one woman on the program, Dr. Annie Besant of India, England, and the world at large, spoke in the name of Theosophy, but her oration—for it was truly an eloquent oration—interpreted the vision and purpose of the Fellowship of Faiths and prophesied its profound, wide-reaching influence for world unity and peace and brotherhood.

A Hindu devotional song, accompanied by a strangely gentle stringed instrument characteristic of the Orient, was sung in the middle of the program by Dilip Kumar Roy, in his picturesque purple Indian robes. The chanting of the Moslem call to prayer, in Arabic, had been the opening music of the meeting. For thirty minutes before 5:15 p. m., when the meeting began, Mr. Allan Brown, organist and choirmaster of the City Temple, had played devotional organ music. Finally, at 7:05 p. m., the City Temple's vested choir led the vast throng in singing—as none so well as London congregations can sing—the universal hymn written by our American Oliver Wendell Holmes:

"Lord of all being, throned afar."

## Under Which Flag, Benzonian?

The pledge of the Evangelical Synod of North America "to withhold its support from any war" is sufficiently lacking in details to arouse wonderment as to just what the Evangelical Synod of North America proposes doing in the event, say, of the United States becoming involved in hostilities with another nation.

Always in the past, when combat has opened between the government of the United States of America and an opposing force, our citizenship has been divided into three classes—those who supported the government, those who opposed the government and those who hid out.

There is absolutely no reason nor basis for an opinion that different conditions can develop in the event of another armed conflict in which this republic participates. Some citizens will help their country, some will join the enemy and some will skulk. The Evangelical Synod of North America owes it to itself particularly to say now and soberly and openly which of the three courses it intended, when it voted a pledge of no support in its Chicago meeting last Friday, to bind itself to take. Kansas City *"Journal Post."*

## Spiritualism, the Religion of the Future *

The National Spiritualist, Chicago

MRS. MARY RIDPATH-MANN, Editor

*Report of Address Before Thirty-fifth Annual Conv., Nat'l Spiritualist Assn.*—San Antonio, Tex., Oct. 10-15.

The speaker based what she had to say upon a remark once made in her presence by a former Secretary of State who said: "He is the wisest and most fortunate of men who knows *what* he believes and *why he believes it!*"

"The late John Hay, when he spoke those words, did not know that he was talking about the Spiritualist," said Mrs. Mann. "But he was! We have the story from the olden mythology of a man named Diogenes who set forth with a lantern in search of an honest man. One might turn the most powerful searchlight known to modern invention upon the Spiritualists of the world, but he would not find among them one individual Spiritualist who does not know what he believes and *why he believes it!*

"What all other religionists believe the Spiritualist *knows.* All that the follower of any orthodox religion, be it Catholic or Protestant or Jew or Gentile, can say is: "I believe!" Each and every one of these rejects the proof of that which he believes. The Spiritualist accepts it. The orthodox declare "*I believe* in the immortality of the soul!" Says the Spiritualists, "*I know* that the Continuity of Life is a fact, because—I can prove it!"

Mrs. Mann declared that the first Psychical Research Society ever known was founded upon the shores of the Sea of Galilee twenty centuries ago, and consisted of twelve members and one Teacher. She pointed out that in the olden days the psychic senses,—clairvoyance, clairaudience, etc.,—were common among men and that the Great Teacher of Nazareth, instead of surrounding himself with highly-educated Pharisees and Saducees, chose for his associates simple tillers of the soil, carpenters and fishermen, knowing that the man who lives close to Nature lives close to God! She held that no brilliant mind of any modern period had ever excelled in accuracy the definition of the word *Faith* given by Paul in his Letters to the Romans and averred that the bit of advice which followed that definition held the finest counsel ever offered to any living creature. *To your Faith add Knowledge!* This, she holds, is what the Spiritualist has done.

The speaker referred to the oft-heard complaint that all Spiritual messages are trivial. "What if they are?" she demanded. "Did it matter that the first message flashed without wires across our ocean by Marconi was unimportant? The significant thing was that *he got it across!*" She related the old, old story from the Odyssey of Homer

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* It is hardly necessary to say that the opinions in these selected articles reflect the views of the writers, not of the Editor of the "Magazine." Ed.

of the return in spirit of Ulysses. His father demanded of him proof that it was really he and when he replied: "These trees under which we stand are those you planted when I was a boy." Could the old man doubt, after that, that he was talking to the spirit of his son? All intelligent investigators of phenomena recognize the value of the so-called "trivial" message. More often than not, in its very triviality lies its evidential value!

Mrs. Mann referred to the address of the evening before at the Municipal Auditorium in which the speaker, Elizabeth Harlow-Goetz, had spoken of "*The Need of a Great Religion.* Spiritualism," said Mrs. Mann, "is that religion!" No longer can the "streets-paved-with-gold" heaven and the "lake-of-fire-and-brimestone" hell of the orthodox religions withstand the onslaught of modern thought. The "faith of our fathers," of which the passing generations have heard so much, means little to the present day young man and woman. Youth, immature as it is, has discovered for itself an appalling fact. So strenuous are our daily lives that no amount of philosophy can make them wholly rational. No amount of religion can make them wholly serene. No amount of love can make them wholly capable of service. But if there is anything in the religion offered him that he can not live with twenty-four hours every day Youth will have none of it! He can not make use of an impractical religion!

In closing, Mrs. Mann held that because of what it has to offer to humankind Spiritualism can not fail to become the Religion of the Future. "It has been said, and that recently," she went on, "that Spiritualism is not Religion. How absurd a thing! If that which expresses belief in Infinite Intelligence; if that which holds that all this great, wonderful universe is the expression of that Intelligence; if that which teaches that whatsoever one sows that also must he reap; if that which tells me that the 'communion of saints' and what I know as 'spirit communication' are one and the same; if that which urges me to do unto others as I would that others shall do unto me; if that which tells me not that man *has* a soul but that man *is* a soul; if that which teaches me that the laws of Nature are the laws of God; last and most satisfying of all, if that which tells me that the doorway to reformation is never closed against any human soul, here or hereafter; if that teaching which embraces all these things is not Religion, then there is no such thing as Religion upon the face of this earth!"

Mrs. Mann closed with a plea that the people of San Antonio should not forget the visit of the National Spiritualist Association. "It will be of little import that we have carried a torch into your midst," she said, "if after we are gone you permit the flame to flicker and go out. Should it chance, therefore, that during this, our mortal life, as an Organization we shall pass this way no more, it is the prayer of every individual Spiritualist that you will not forget the message which Modern Spiritualism is thundering to the world. That message you have heard preached and seen practiced since we have been in your midst: There is no death! There are no dead!"

## Watchman, What of the Night?

The Virginia Churchman, Richmond

W. E. Cox

*Closing Address of the Virginia Conf. of Liberal Evangelicals*

In matters of religion today, we face a condition, not a theory. There are many who think, and rightly, that with the ever widening field of human knowledge, shedding new light on old truths, there should be some restatement of the old truths in the light of the newer knowledge.

Then there are those who fear, and with much reason, that those most enthusiastic about the newer knowledge may become so enamored of the newer views of truth that they lose sight of, or do violence to, the truth itself. For example, it is one thing to *reinterpret* the Creed, in the light of knowledge former generations did not have; it is quite another thing to discredit the Creed itself, or sweep it overboard altogether.

In a situation such as this three things are important:

First, a fixed purpose to cultivate and to keep, as far as is possible under the limitations of our poor human nature, a balanced mind. Truth is one, but we see it from many angles, and the balanced mind seeks to understand, and to appraise at its true value, the point of view of others as well as that of one's self. It seeks also to comprehend and to hold to the wholeness of truth, not to exaggerate a fragment of truth at the expense of truth in its wholeness. The new and the old in religion are but different aspects of truth, and the balanced mind will neither reject the old and substitute the new, nor exaggerate the new out of proportion to the old, but seek to keep both rightly related.

Second, we need to keep unmistakably clear the distinction between the eternal verities of the faith and the purely human theories of men in their effort to explain the faith. It is legitimate for us, in the light of our day, with its marvelous advance in every field of human knowledge, to review and revise the purely human theories and interpretations of all preceding generations, provided only we review and revise the *theories* and *interpretations* of men *about* the eternal verities, not impugn the eternal verities themselves.

Thirdly, and most supremely, we need renewed allegiance to our Lord Jesus Christ, through deeper and truer faith in Him. If that faith is real, and not a mere sentiment, it means that we believe in Him enough to take Him at His word, and to do as He said do. The institutions which He established because He, in His wisdom, knew that our poor human nature needed them, come to have for us an authoritative force not hastily pushed aside by individual opinion or the changing moods of changing years.

In the first place we have His explicit teaching, and the teaching of the Apostles trained directly by Him, recorded in Holy Scripture. His Word, then, as recorded in Holy Scripture, constitutes for us an authority above that of our own limited knowledge.

Then we have the age-old Institution called the Christian Church. By "the Church," be it remembered, we are not thinking of voluntary associations of men for reasons of practical expediency, either in the present day or in the days of the Apostles. The first mention of the Church in the New Testament is by our Lord Himself. The personal pronouns, "My" Church, and "I" will build, clearly indicate that the idea was His own, and that He executed it upon His own initiative, as a part of His plan for the redemption of the world. It is a striking fact that on the day of Pentecost, the very first day that the Apostles began to preach under their own leadership, the Church was there, an established fact; for the converts were immediately baptized into it, and we read that "the Lord added to the Church daily such as should be saved." The first general council of the Church is evidence of the fact that its authority in matters of doctrine and of practice rose above that of any individual or group of individuals within the Church.

Likewise the Ministry of the Church was not an impromptu ministry. It also was divinely instituted, and its functions specifically defined. "Ye have not chosen me, but I have chosen you, and ordained you" (S. Jn. 15: 16). "As my Father hath sent me, so send I you" (S. Jn. 20: 21). The Apostles so understood it, for we read regarding Judas, "he was numbered with us, and had obtained part of *this ministry*" (Acts 1: 17); also that Matthias was chosen "that he may take part of *this ministry* and apostleship, *from which Judas by transgression fell*" (Acts 1: 25). Their mission was likewise specified: "Go . . . teach . . . baptize . . . teaching them to observe all things *whatsoever I have commanded you.*"

The Sacraments, too, were given to the Church by the Master, and come down to us on His authority, but for the purpose of this paper we pass them by and come to the matter of the Creed.

It is often thought and sometimes said that the Creed called "The Apostles' Creed" was not the creed of the Apostles at all, but a formula that somehow just grew up in the Church long years after the Apostles' time. What are the facts?

When our Lord sent His Apostles out to their work under the terms of "The Great Commission" He said to them: "Ge ye therefore, and teach all nations, *baptizing them in the name of the Father*, and *of the Son*, and *of the Holy Ghost.*"

This simple baptismal formula was from the very beginning of the Church, and is now, the heart of the Christian faith, and when, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, the Church did amplify it, she did so by simply writting-in the Scripture record of the nature and work of the three Persons of the Godhead, without one touch of human opinion or of philosophic speculation.

But after all, and aside from all this, the problems of Christendom are not so much intellectual as spiritual.

When we have used to the uttermost the intelligence God has

given us, if it brings that wisdom which ought to be the handmaid of knowledge, it must, sooner or later, convince us of the limitations of finite human knowledge, and call us back to that simple statement of faith given us by the dear Lord Himself and enshrined in the Apostles' Creed.

"Lord, I believe: help Thou mine unbelief."

## The Evangelical Synod, Heading In — Where?

The Evangelical Synod (*Unierte Kirche*) has been fighting the Lutheran Church since its first organization. Its leaders have found fault especially with the Missouri Synod for its strict anti-unionistic stand and have ransacked the dictionaries, both German and English, for hard words to apply to us. We shall not repeat them here because they do not make pleasant reading, and we strive to please. But now the question: Where has the Evangelical Synod landed through its boasted "freedom in non-essentials"? Where will an ocean liner land when it discards its rudder at the dock? The final moorings of the Evangelical Synod are not yet in sight, but we are able to mark some of the later stages of its rudderless journey. The *Theological Magazine* of that church-body last year contained an article entitled "The Dilemma of the Eden Graduate." Eden Seminary is the theological school of the Evangelical Synod, and a dilemma is any situation in which one has the choice of two evils. Now, the dilemma described in this article is due to the fact that the Evangelical Synod still has a catechism containing such doctrines as original sin, the atonement through Christ's blood, the resurrection of the dead, etc., while at the theological seminary the students are taught that quite a few of these doctrines are old rubbish. The seminary, says this writer, has heeded the call for "up-to-dateness" and so has discarded, for instance, the belief in angels as "fantastic speculative dogma." But the catechism still teaches the existence of angels! Again: "You flunk in Eden in case you answer in an examination that man lost the image of God as a consequence of the fall of the first man; while, if you teach the answer that is there considered correct, after you have entered the ministry, you will be denounced as a heretic," since the catechism still teaches original sin. Worst of all: the catechism teaches the substitutionary atonement through the blood of Christ, while the seminary professor teaches that in Christ's work "we have not by a judgment of God a transference to us of a performance of His, as that of another person,"—a plain denial of the sacrificial death of our Lord. The writer of the article complains that this "practise of teaching one theology in our seminary and expecting our graduates to preach another" causes hopeless confusion; in fact, "Eulenspiegel could certainly not have thought of a more ridiculous situation." But this situation is simply the result of consistently living up to the unionistic principle.

*Lutheran Witness.*

# Book Review

(When ordering books, please mention this Magzaine.)
NOTE—Reviews, when not signed, are by the Editor.

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**The Life of the Spirit and the Life of Today,** by *Evelyn Underhill.* New York, E. P. Dutton & Co., 1922, 311 pages.

The author, an English woman, is perhaps the best-informed scholar of the mysticisms of all lands and times. Her seven other publications are all, without exception, on this subject. Her exposition of the spiritual life, in this volume, also has a decidedly mystical tinge. The spiritual life is to her the awareness of the God-presence. Like other mystics, she takes little interest in the difference of creeds and of religions. Religious life is found everywhere; and while our devotional text book is the bible, the spiritual nature of other people finds its nourishment in other sacred books. She quotes largely from Christian mystics, but also from the Mohammedan Sufis and from Hindu teachers. Plotinus, the Neo-Platonist, seems however, to be her special favorite.

Her chief aim is to interpret the abiding facts of the spiritual life. The spiritual life is not a creation of the imagination; it is not an element that may be left unconsidered by the practical; it is not a department only of human life. No, it is life in its fulness; the life of the spirit is, indeed, immersed in the streams of history, but it is poised on the eternal world.

Psychology has, in the last ten or twenty years, given increasing attention to the phenomena of the spiritual, but it has not invalidated any of its essential features. In fact, it is not the function of psychology to either prove or disprove the reality of religion; it can only interpret it in accordance with the established methods of psychological investigation. The author does not undertake a philosophical proof of the spiritual. We find it everywhere, at all times and in all places. It has left its mark on history, on culture, in literature; it is in evidence to-day. The materialist only could deny its reality. All others will take it as a most important fact of human life.

Psychology (and biology) has rendered us a service by helping us understand old facts under new names. Original sin is rejected by most of the modern-minded; as the survival of primitive instincts it is accepted even by the biologist. According to the evolutionist the history of primitive man covered millions of years, the history of civilized man only a few thousand. What wonder that the archaic, the primitive, the animal is still a mighty force in his development. The vital factor in nature is not thought, not the intellect but instinct, that powerful urge in human nature that seeks for self-expres-

sion, self-preservation, for fulness of life. It is the task of religious education to *sublimate the instinct*, to give them a higher content, to direct them to the highest reality, to God. We must find a place for man's last stage of development, the spiritual consciousness.

In these ways we learn to understand in modern terms what Paul meant by the old and the new Adam, the natural and the spiritual man. What the bible attributes to the solicitations of the devil we understand as the uprushes of our primitive or animal past. Sin is a falling back to past levels of conduct, a relic of our zoological past; it is a failure to correspond with the light which we now possess. Salvation is the healing of the conflict by the unification of the instinctive and the ideal life. Conversion is the turning of the lower desires into higher channels.

Perhaps this "sublimation of instincts" is actually nothing else than the theological change from the natural to the spiritual man; the getting of new motives, ideals and satisfaction, at least in effect the same as regeneration: how does this fundamental change come about?

Here the author refers first to the great God-conscious men of the past as living examples of the reality and creative power of the spiritual life, and as generators of such life in others. She finds that these men—largely all of the mystical type—derived their power from *contemplation.* They had the gift of turning away from the "window" of ordinary consciousness to the "fore-conscious," the fringe of the conscious where reverie and meditation go on, the prayer region. In this region they learned *to be still* and *find* the *divine presence.* This discovery gives a great joy—it is always tinged with feeling—invests with a sense of security and power. It leads to complete surrender, makes God present to the spiritual eye everywhere; and one of its main effects is the love of one's fellows, an all-inclusive love having nothing to do with race, station, or worldly possession. Such transformed personalities have a contagious influence, they gather groups around themselves where, by sympathy and imitation the spirit of the founder is propagated.

The writer shows how faith in its effect on the person who has it and on others, strickingly resembles the psychological term of *suggestion*, whether auto- or hetero-suggestion. By no means does she want to exclude the divine factor, but to emphasize the cooperation of human will and "grace," the mood of expectancy preparing the individual for the reception of the divine action. The conditions for an effective suggestion are quiescence, attention and feeling. Sometimes the mere repetition of a word or phrase has surprising results: it strengthens attention and heightens feeling.

From these mystical examples, in which the author delights (by the way, she always mentions Paul, St. Francis, St. Theresa, John of the Cross, Kabir (?), Fox, John Wesley—but *never Luther* although he certainly had much of the mystic temperament), she now turns to the *Church.* The Church certainly plays an important place in the God-discovery and the cultivation of the spiritual. The writer has a

great regard for the Church. The Church keeps the balance between stability and novelty. She is "embodied history," and the progress of man depends on conserving and exploring; she must have room for the priest and the prophet. Her cult "hands on the life aiming at God," it creates the atmosphere of prayer, it makes for the largest possible suggestibility. In her cult there accumulate in time modes of thought and approach that we have outgrown; there must be elimination, therefore, from time to time. There are other elements in the church: the ministry, beliefs and denominations (and loyalty to them). Miss Underhill has little to say about these.

She is more interested in the directly spiritual, in the cultivation of spiritual character, the stages being: humility, repentance, complete surrender. As a modern example of a perfect saint she cites Sadhu Sundar Singh. In him the question as to how to develop the natural into the spiritual, finds a complete answer. His habit of silence and spiritual absorption, his seeking of God and him only, his determination, his suffering, his supreme spirituality and humble naturalness, the combination of contemplation and ceaseless activity point the way in which others may be led to similar experiences.

In the closing chapters the author speaks about the part *education* ought to play in the spiritualization of the young. It is in part an emphatic stressing of the need of mystical culture in the child and young person; in part a sublimation and employment of all natural instincts (herd instinct, the creative, heroic, adventurous) that she advises.

In the last chapter she speaks of the social implications of the spiritual life: the "social gospel." While she agrees that the individual culture should be supplemented by the spiritualizing of the social order, she is convinced that this can only be done by individuals who have cultivated in themselves the mystical or contemplative elements and hand on their spirit to others (being "crowd-compellers"). This way is naturally slow, but it alone leads to real success.

The book shows an amazing insight into the deeps of religious mysticism. Most of the chapters are inspiring and stimulating.

A person can hardly read, especially the first chapters, without experiencing a tonic effect on his prayer life. We cannot endorse all she says. All religions are more or less good to her; we should put more stress on the likeness of all faiths than on their differences. Forgiveness of sin, the atonement, the resurrection, the things on which we base our faith, are not even mentioned. She concentrates entirely on the mystical element of prayer and faith. Wordless prayers, or prayers consisting of a word only (God, God, God! or, Sin, Sin—out!) are often better than the ordinary kind. We differ here entirely. Whatever be the experience of the advanced mystic, the ordinary Christian should express as well as collect his thoughts in an orderly way, even audibly, often starting from bible words. But we have already taken up too much room: the book is the product of an exceedingly spiritual soul but it has its limitations.

**Christ at the Round Table,** by *E. Stanley Jones*, author of "the Christ of the Indian Road." The Abingdon Press, 1928. 328 pages, $1.50.

We discussed "the Christ of the Indian Road" in the July number of 1927 (pp. 309, ff. ). The book was then in its 6th edition although the first had only appeared in 1925. The book was so remarkable by its spirituality that many anxiously looked forward to the next production from the same hand. This is now before us in the volume under discussion. After reading most of the book, we say that Stanley Jones has not disappointed us. There is the same deep earnestness, the same hold on religious reality, the same Christian certitude, and the same sympathy with, and understanding of, the elements of truth in other religions.

Mr. Jones knows that the attitude in comparative religion has swung from the former extreme of absolute repudiation to the other of saying all religions are one in the center. Christianity is only one of the many ways of finding in God a dynamic for right living. It may be the best one so far, but its claim to finality is untenable. The highest stage in the religious evolution of the race will probably be a sifted amalgam from the whole.

The author does not share this "broad minded" attitude of the day. He is fully convinced that Christ alone is equal to the needs of man. But he holds this conviction not only because he has found him so in his own experience, or because he has been able to defeat the adherent of other faiths in argument. He has met with them in fraternal conferences. Hindus, Mohammedans, any kind of non-Christians, have sat with him at the table, not to argue but simply to say *what their religion has meant to them.* Men of various professions, men in high positions, men of the highest culture, two thirds of them in every case non-Christians, have been asked to state what they had found of religious certainty, of unification of life, of character-building energy as a result of their religious experiences. They have sat, not with Jones only, but with "Christ at the Round Table"—and in every case Christ has come out victorious; he controlled the situation at the end of every conference.

The readers of "The Christ of the Indian Road" will not be surprised to find that the author again strikes the note of spiritual *experience* with telling effect. Any man, any missionary with only an ordinary amount of experimental religion would hardly have dared to expose himself to such a test. But the reader of this book will realize that Mr. Jones was by his consecration, his humility, his discernment, his Christlikeness eminently fitted for the task.

The Indian is naturally religious. His soul, like nature, abhors a vacuum. There is no race that has with such earnestness striven for religious truth. No language is so well equipped with religious and philosophical terms as the languages used in this land. But they have *not found.* Their religions are pantheistic. God is the All, and man's redemption is found in his absorption in the All. Their God lacks personality and the highest task for man is to get rid of his

individuality, whether this be done by way of self-renunciation, of worship or of good works. It is highly interesting and often pathetic to read the self-revelations made in the pages of this book by some of the best men of India. There is to be noted a diffusion of the sense of the divine with all of them, but also a great uncertainty. None of them has *found*. Even Gandhi—whom the author interviewed at one time—says, "it may take ages" (this process of identification with the All).

Mr. Jones is sure that the soul of India offers a great opportunity to Christian missions. But only a church that has the power to convert is equal to the task. Our greatest danger, he says, is not from anti-Christianity, but from sub-Christianity. The redemption we bring must be a collective redemption: Jesus will save everything that is good in Indian life.

The author's emphasis on personal experience as the decisive thing in religion may seem to expose him to the danger of subjectivism. He discusses this in a chapter, "Certainty and Authority." Where is religious certainty to be found, when can we say we have final authority for our experience on our side? When the individual experience is certified and corrected by collective Christian experience, or still better, when the Jesus of history becomes the Christ of experience, and the resultant experience of the individual is corroborated by that of the church. Here the three factors, the Word, the Church and the individual are the trinity guaranteeing the reality and validity of the religious life in the soul.

The book abounds in wonderfully fascinating examples of the transforming power of the Christian religion in the life of the Indian people. The author, although conversant with all movements of the modern intellect, is at all times in close touch with the throbbing spirit forces, always *in Christ*, to speak with Paul. We know of no recent book where the reader is so sure of a rich spiritual feast as in this one.

**Does Civilization Need Religion?** by *Reinhold Niebuhr*. The Macmillan Company, 1928. 242 pages, $2.00.

The author, already well known by his consistent endeavor to recover for us the ethics of Jesus as a criterion for the appraisal of modern ethics, here examines what religion has done for our present-day civilization. His conclusions are not reassuring to the religionist. According to Niebuhr the Christian religion has wholly failed to make our civilization ethical, so much so that millions have ceased to hope for anything from Christianity in this direction. But the question the writer seeks to solve in this book is whether "the present social impotence of religion is due to innate defects or to specific and historical limitations which the years and the demands of the times may change."

"Modern science has depersonalized nature and modern industrialism has debased personality." There we have the two powerful foes that threaten the very life of religion in its emphasis on personal val-

ues. And of the two the church has directed its fighting energy chiefly upon the former. It has made its peace with evolution, but has insisted that back of the evolutionary process there is the power of the Creator. Evolution was simply the mode used by the creative spirit. However, to make civilization ethical is a much harder task. To challenge the immoral facts of society takes a heroism, a faith, an intelligence compared with which the fight with a secular philosophy is mere child's play. The latter can be done in the study, the former may cost us our bread and butter, our very existence, besides the study. And so far religion as a whole has failed to condemn the social iniquities of the age.

This recognition of religion's partial failure must not blind us to the fact that, in other respects, it has done things which we can never do without. In the individual life it enables us to achieve a character in which the higher triumphs over the lower. Furthermore, it strengthens us against the evils in nature and life by the faith that there is a personal God at the center of the universe. "Religion is the courageous logic which makes ethical struggle consist with world facts." As a result, the classes which suffer least from present social maladjustment, i. e., the country folks and the middle classes, are the ones where religion still has its strongest hold. Nevertheless, personal piety does not solve social problems. Faith and love have not endowed the church with social intelligence, and lacking this, the industrial masses have turned away from her. Instead of expecting anything from a God who seems to care so little for their well-being, they have accepted a materialistic world view according to which we live in a universe of brute force where only the fittest, i. e., the strongest, survive. The laboring men, being the most numerous, will be the strongest as soon as they are unified by organization, and in the inevitable class struggle they will eventually be the victors. Theirs is a philosophy which recognizes no moral or spiritual values and can, therefore, not produce a stable and permanent society. Even systems built on morality, but rejecting religion, seem to be ineffective. With the stoics, they led either to the Scylla of pride or the Charybdis of despair, and Bertrand Russell's "unyielding despair," of recent date, shows that the situation has not changed.

The author now proceeds to review the past and to point out what the church in its development has done with the religion of Jesus. This historical survey brings out the amazing power of keen analysis the writer is possessed of, and the range and definiteness of his information. The story he has to tell is a sad one, and although he naturally finds defects everywhere, his sharpest criticisms are reserved for the Protestant church; and in the Protestant church again, Calvinism is his bête noire. Calvinism has brought forth and suckled the pet sin of the age, *greed*.

The Roman Church, in spite of all its faults, had some moral idealism in its monkish orders, which kept up a stubborn conflict with social conditions. Here we have a St. Francis, as Christlike a person as ever lived. His ideal was indeed that of an ascetic, but "asceticism

is probably nearest to the real genius of religion and most adequate for the needs of our day." Then, the Catholic church always retained its spiritual independence from secular powers and the character of a world institution. Protestantism created the secular state and became subject to it. Its churches are national institutions, and the Lutherans, particularly, in their subserviency to the state, lost all influence on public life.

Niebuhr adopts the thesis of Max Weber, the German economist, taken over and elaborated later by Troeltsch (Soziallehren, see pp. 703, 710 ff.), that *Calvinism* is the *father* of *Capitalism*. While the ancient Greeks preferred a life of leisure and meditation, Calvin demands one of manual toil and commercial eterprise. Like the early Jewish prophets he saw in material welfare the blessing from above, he entirely disregarded the social note of the 8th century Jewish teachers. This religious sanction of material gain was a new thing in history. But it found a ready soil in the Protestant world. While the Lutherans despaired of conquering the world, the Calvinists were convinced of their ability to make it subject to individual initiative and moral ideals. Their most successful representatives in the new world are the Puritans. Troeltsch can quote many facts and opinions to show that the Puritan fight against sloth and luxury and their experience in the discipline of work has made them capitalistic eventually. Niebuhr, in this connection, mentions even Wesley, giving his well-known advice on money matters: "Make all you can, save all you can, give all you can!" It was Wesley's expressed opinion that religion producing industry and frugality, must necessarily produce riches also; and to counteract the evil effect of growing riches there is only one way: philanthropy, generous giving! Every one knows that there is no country where this philosophy is more generally held than in America. Religion pays, that is the burden of no end of sermons. There is no other country either where religion is more thoroughly at home than in ours, and, says Niebuhr, *when that is the case*, it has *lost its savor*. We believe in America that religion, the Christian religion at least, has the power to transform the world. The great brotherhood of the "Kingdom idea" preach that as their alpha and omega. Niebuhr, on the other hand, does not share this faith. Religion aims to *transcend* the world, not to transform it. Jesus was indifferent to the "business of earth." Happiness is to him founded on internal resources.

We are in a sorry state then. We live in a world largely made by Puritans, the capitalists in embryo. Adam Smith has become the unchallenged authority of the commercial world. Our religion promotes individual efficiency; our riches we consider heaven's blessing on our intelligence, morality, and industry. But we find that the pride of our life, our wealth, is at the same time our corruption; that it has produced in us the characteristic vice of capitalism, greed. Moreover, we find that this same wealth is founded on the economic enslavement of the masses. Our religion has so far seldom made us feel the enormity of our lapse from Christian ideals; but it has killed

the faith in the genuineness of our religion in the submerged millions. The strange thing is that so few can see the evil of our ways. Even the enlightened Liberal is often blind here. As Rauschenbusch used to say: "A Liberal in theology and reactionary in economics, is a frequent combination." Niebuhr puts it this way: The theological simplicity of Jesus has appealed more to the Protestant (Liberal) than his moral austerity."

If then Protestantism has so ignominously capitulated before the force of political and economic groups, how may the situation be saved? Where is there a way out? The Socialists see salvation in the socializing of industry, whereby the productive workers are made the owners and distributors of what they produce. This would create an economic environment in which morality would have a better chance of growth. The Christian Socialists while accepting the economic principles of Socialism, would enlist the cooperation of the church for the preservation of moral and spiritual values. The author agrees with neither the one nor the other. According to him help must come from such laymen as are entirely detached from the materialistic spirit and, at the same time, are experts in the social sciences: a combination, it would seem, of a St. Francis and a modern professor of sociology! Such a combination of spiritual and technical excellence might be hard to find. And even if there were more men of such type, we think they would have to exert, and preserve, their influence *through* an *institution*. The disciples of Jesus did that, and even the prophets of the O. T., although such severe critics of the church of their day, would have been forgotten if the church had not handed down their message. But if the church is an unfit instrument for social reconstruction, what other medium would take its place?

In a closing chapter the writer tries to coordinate his conception of man and his world in an adequate philosophy. This philosophy must necessarily be theistic. At the same time, it must do justice to the fact that stubborn and gigantic forces of evil seem to belie the belief in an omnipotent and kindly world ruler. A pantheism which drapes evil in the garments of the good, or a naturalism which denies the ideal cannot suffice. So the writer finds himself almost forced to posit a dualism of ultimate principles, reminding us of the "finite God" of Mr. Wells, and other post-war speculations. Philosophy will probably wrestle with the antagonism of the real and the ideal to the end of time. Meanwhile we have faith, and in it a power that not only transcends the world, but also transforms it. Whatever be the difficulties of theism, a dualistic philosophy would throw us back to where ancient Persia was.

The book, we may say without exaggeration, is written by one of the keenest minds the country possesses. And as the author unfolds his information, one does not know whether to wonder more at its extent or the complete mastery with which it is used.

Niebuhr does not write for the ordinary reader, however. He writes for the scholar. He packs so much into every sentence that it is at times even hard for the latter to assimilate it readily. It is

said that in religion the natural man must first become spiritual, and then natural again. So it may also be said in scholarship, that a student must first become a scholar, an expert; and then, laying off the heavy armor of the scientific equipment, walk lightly as the shepherd boy of old, fighting with weapons as simple as a smooth stone. Niebuhr could learn here from Rauschenbusch. R., when he appeared before the public 20 years ago, with his first book, astonished the world not only by his amazing command of the subject, but equally by the finished ease and popularity of his style. If our author will walk in the steps of the great prophet from Rochester, he will not only be admired, but also read by the larger number.

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**The Impatience of a Parson.** A Plea for the Recovery of Vital Christianity by *H. R. L. Sheppard*, lately Vicar of St. Martin—in the Fields. Doubleday, Doran & Company. 1928. 227 pages, $2.00.

When we first saw this book and read in the advertisements that, at last, a bold voice was raised against ecclesiasticism in the Church of England, we thought it would contain a declaration of war on the Anglo-Catholic movement in that church. It is not that at all, however. The author does say that "the Roman church with all its merit is not and cannot be the chosen home of free men and women"; but his criticism is not directed against any wing of, or movement in the church. According to him the Church of England as a whole is in danger of wasting its strength on questions of an ecclesiastical nature and thereby losing a great moral and spiritual opportunity. Owing to the size and importance of this church, it could make a great contribution to Christendom. The hour demands of the church a plain *program* of *Christian living;* and so far the church has neither presented nor exemplified it. And, secondly, the pressing needs of the time require a *united church.* But the Church of England will not promote the cause of church union unless it abandons all claims of superiority.

Our time is in a critical stage. The war has destroyed our faith in the automatic improvement of society. Many feel with us that science and education are unavailing in the task of regenerating the world. Christianity alone can help, for it asks us to be true to our own ideals; it gives the power "to become"; it has the exhaustless personality of Christ. Or is, perhaps, the Galilean too great for us? It is indeed easier to fulfil the demands of the church than those of Christ. It is easier to accept the dogmas of the faith than to employ its ethics. Still the church that is only a devotional society will have no power nor courage for the task before us.

The church is an institution doubtless founded under the divine spirit. The individual cannot develop without its fostering care, nor its achievements and traditions be preserved without a permanent organization. Yet the church is only a means to an end; it must always be "subsidiary to the adventure in Christian living."

When is a church Christian? the writer asks. When its corporate ethical ideals are on the same level as those of the individual

Christian. The Christ of the Sermon on the Mount is the fountain and norm for our morality. It is not the church's business to develop a program of social reform. In the author's opinion, Christian individuals, loving, humble, sincere, courageous, reared in the spirit of the Son of man, will regenerate society.

Christ's teachings were chiefly of the fatherhood of God and the brotherhood of man. The writer here adopts the position of modern theology: Christ "dethroned the tyrant God of the O. T." God is not a punisher at all. He loves everybody and receives every penitent sinner without condition. (Paul's statement that we are justified *through* the *redemption* which is in Christ Jesus, is evidently a theological speculation only.) The most repugnant item of orthodox belief is to him the doctrine of everlasting punishment. Doubtless most of us sympathize heartily with him in this respect.

As to the question of church unity, the writer takes, for an Episcopalian, a bold stand. The Church of England must give up its love of status and prestige. The fundamental stumbling block, however, is its claim of apostolic succession. This belief, historically untenable, and spiritually preposterous, the Church of England is bound to set aside. He knows that that is a sacrifice so great that it would be almost tantamount to self-destruction. But he is fully aware that the church must go to the very limit of self-sacrifice. Without mutual self-denial the churches will never come together. And it must be borne in mind by his church that its opponents are the world, the flesh and the devil, not other churches.

In closing he enumerates a number of things which are fundamental if the recovery of vital Christianity is to be made possible. They are: The father-God of Jesus is the essential of theological belief; the church is an important means, not an end; no intellectual tests are to be imposed; no magic is to be attached to the sacraments; the ethical ideals of the Sermon on the Mount are practicable. Industrial autocracy and all war are to be anathematized. The current conception of Hell is un-Christian.

The Anglican Church should desire to remove every barrier to church union. The differences among the churches should not be ended but recognized as secondary. The Anglican Church while believing in episcopal government, should dissociate itself from the belief that the Apostolic succession is the test of the validity of a Christian church.

These propositions the author submits to his church in the hope that the coming *Lambeth Conference* of *Bishops* (in 1930) may see their way clear to accept the most important. This hope can only be fulfilled if the new archbishop (the present one is 80 years old) will be a "reformer, not a referee," as before. Under the circumstances, the book shows a daring and determined, yet sane spirit. There is little likelihood that it will sweep the bench of bishops out of its reactionary stolidity. But if it could by some kind of miracle, do something substantial, the cause of Christian unity and progress would indeed seem bright.

**To Know Him.** Five addresses by *Merton S. Rice.* The Abingdon Press, 1927. 100 pages, $1.00

These sermons, delivered as the Matthew Simpson Foundation lectures at De Pauw University, in 1927, show the author, the pastor of the Metropolitan Methodist Episcopal Church, of Detroit, in his natural self. Reviewer has had the privilege to hear Dr. Rice several times, and each time he was charmed with him. He has a winning personality, a spontaneous eloquence, and a most delightful and irresistible naturalness.

In this little volume he presents Jesus as the Man, the Teacher, the Friend, and the Savior. There is in the treatment of his subject, from start to finish, the human touch. Although speaking in a university, the author makes no attempt to dazzle by a display of learning. In fact, the sermons might have been held anywhere else and be just as adequate.

It is the gospel for the individual soul he preaches; the social gospel is not particularly his domain. But within his own sphere he is a master. His stories are a strong feature in his presentation. And whether he tells the touching tale of Silas Marner over again; or of the tug Iowa coming to port with 33 men saved from their storm-wrecked vessel; or of Mrs. Barney rescuing "Old Sal"—they are all good and told with simplicity and a precision of detail reminding, in its way, of the masters of the old Dutch school.

So, we say to the preacher, read Dr. Rice's books and you will lay in a stock of anecdotes at any rate, that will come in quite handy in time of need.